

# briarpatch

FIERCELY INDEPENDENT

## "AZAADI"

Inside Indian-occupied  
Kashmir's deadliest year  
in a decade

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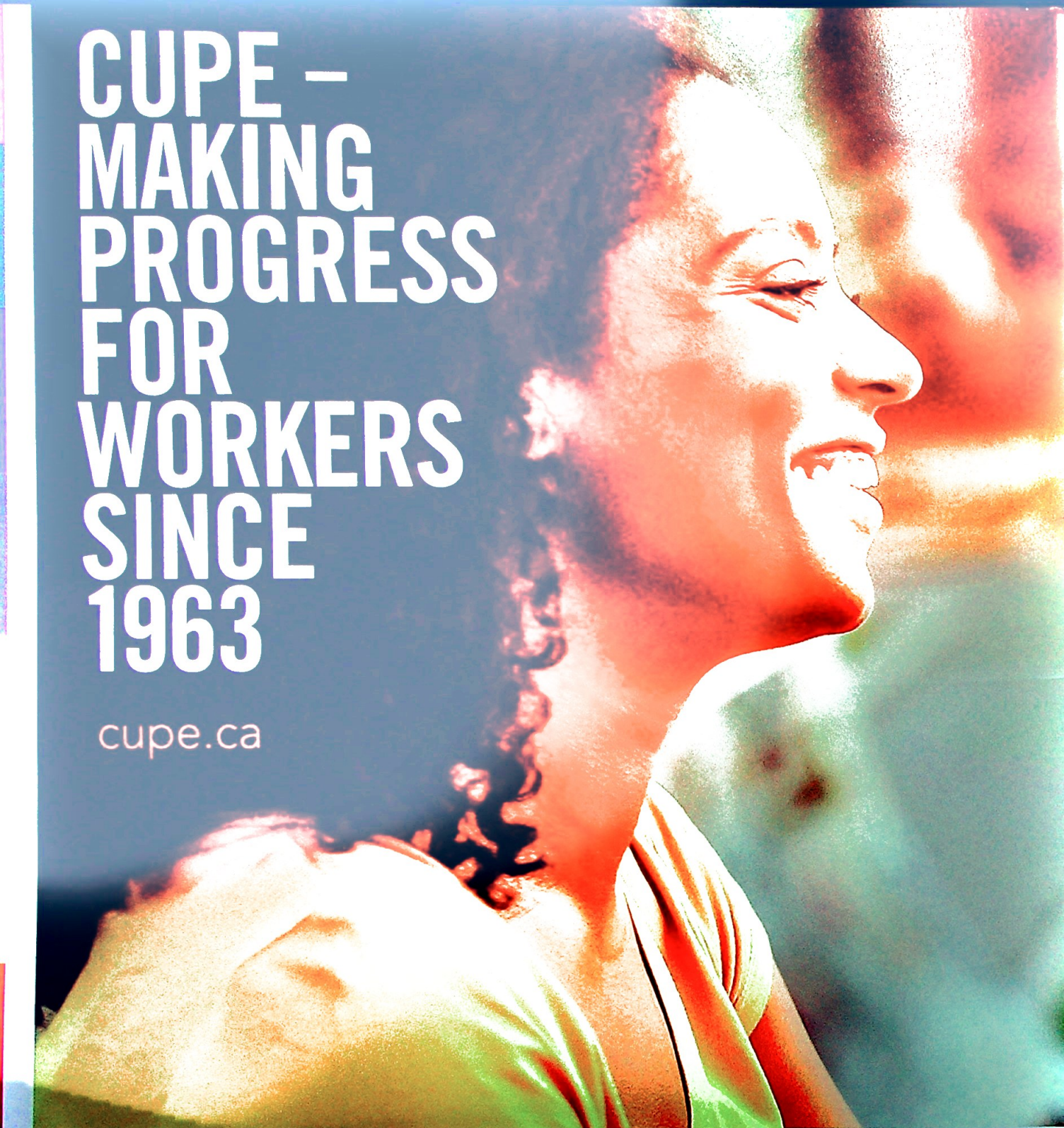
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A woman with dark curly hair is shown in profile, smiling and looking upwards. The background is a vibrant, abstract mix of colors including blue, orange, and green, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is positive and hopeful.

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*Thousands of Kashmiris attend the funeral of militant Irfan Ahmad Dar, who was killed in a gun-battle in central Kashmir's Budgam district on September 28, 2018.*

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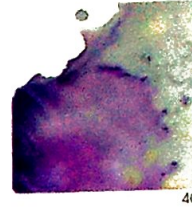
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*The Just Transitions issue, which was originally announced to be published as the March/April issue, will instead be published as the May/June issue.*



# In mourning

If you've been paying any attention to the news, you'll have seen the images of militarized RCMP climbing over the heads and outstretched hands of Indigenous land defenders. On January 7, armed police broke down a checkpoint on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and arrested 14 people.

Members of the Unist'ot'en House of the Gilseyhu Clan have been reoccupying parts of their traditional territory for nine years. The Unist'ot'en camp has been preventing seven proposed pipelines from cutting through Wet'suwet'en Yintah (territory) – most recently, TransCanada's Coastal GasLink pipeline.

But what most media failed to report was that the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs were in mourning.

Three days before the raid, Chief Kloum Khun's sister and Chief Smogolgem's mother passed away. Some have speculated that the RCMP deliberately timed the raid to coincide with the period of mourning. "Our family, Unist'ot'en, are supposed to be standing by Smogolgem," Chief Lht'at'en explains in a video posted on the camp's Facebook page. "We are forced to be here taking care of our Yintah."

Since the RCMP invasion, the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have tentatively agreed to allow pipeline workers to enter their territory. They maintain that they do not consent to the Coastal GasLink pipeline being built through their traditional territory, but by granting access they are trying to forestall another confrontation, trying to keep their community safe.

As the funeral began on January 11, RCMP began dismantling the gate to Unist'ot'en.

"When someone's grieving and there's a death – especially with a matriarch – through our traditions, they tell us that we can't conduct our business and we can't do anything," says Unist'ot'en spokesperson Freda Huson in the video. "It wasn't that our hereditary chiefs were rolling over and saying they're giving up, like what the world's thinking right now."

"It is our ritual and our culture that we support one another." Lht'at'en adds.

I've been thinking about mourning – as one does, when everything is on fire and people are dying. Who and what do we mourn? How do we mourn, and what ways of mourning are respected or deemed acceptable? This issue of *Briarpatch* touches on these questions.

When 11 people were gunned down in a Pittsburgh synagogue in October, my partner Jon – who does Jewish anti-occupation organizing in Toronto – was visiting me in Regina. There is almost no leftist Jewish community in Regina, no one for him to mourn with. That night, the two of us stood in my living room and he recited the Mourner's Kaddish, even though Kaddish is meant to be said in a quorum of 10. He worked for

most of the next day from that same living room, remotely coordinating a vigil in Toronto that he would not be able to attend, to mourn the lives of people he had never met.

When news surfaces of civilians and militants being shot dead by the Indian army in Kashmir, I mourn. It feels like I'm mourning alone – few people in North America know about the bloody occupation of Kashmir, and those who do often defend India's actions. The Indian state and media call these young Kashmiri men "terrorists" – a word that has been weaponized over the last two decades to brand vast swaths of brown and Muslim people as unmournable, lives that can be lost without being a loss.

We mourn people because we believe that their lives were important. To fail to mourn someone, or to stop someone from mourning, is to say that the dead person's life didn't matter. Mourning, like everything, is a political question and statement.

The Canadian state's failure to respect the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs' mourning shows their hand. It shows that they consider Indigenous lives and culture unimportant. But that's hardly news.

What I'm interested in is what our mourning moves us to do. Do we allow our mourning to be weaponized to install cops in our holy places? Or do we use it – as Sterling Stutz, an organizer of the Toronto vigil for the Pittsburgh shooting victims, put it – to "[pull tighter] the ties that hold us in this struggle against white supremacy"? Can we not use it to galvanize us to rise up against occupation, against land theft, against the corporations that would profit from our destitution and death?

The powerful will try to convince us that some people are not worth mourning because their lives were negligible to begin with. In her essay "Precariousness and Grievability – When Is Life Grievable?" Judith Butler explains, "An ungrievable life is one that cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all. We can see the division of the globe into grievable and ungrievable lives from the perspective of those who wage war in order to defend the lives of certain communities, and to defend them against the lives of others – even if it means taking those latter lives."

The work of journalists is, in a macabre way, to encourage mourning. To shed light on lives that are at risk of becoming ungrievable, and deaths that would otherwise go unseen. We must pay attention to who we are not supposed to mourn, to what mourning is under-reported or discouraged. We should teach people to extend recognition to those lives we have been taught not to grieve – and then use that grief to build stronger communities, to protect each other, and to fight back. ★



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WORDS BY ERICA HIROKO

WRITING IN THE MARGINS CREATIVE NON-FICTION WINNER

PHOTOS BY KAYLA ISOMURA

WRITING IN THE MARGINS PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER

*"I come from the dreams of my ancestors."*

*—An affirmation for queer people of colour*

In the palm of my hand, I delicately finger a pair of unfamiliar ID cards printed on worn pieces of coloured paper, yellow and salmon pink. The faded type reveals they were issued in the spring of 1941 with approval from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The yellow marks my great-grandmother as a Japanese National and the pink indicates my great-grandfather was a naturalized Canadian. Between my thumb and index finger, I clasp these rare and coveted discoveries: names, addresses, heights, weights, occupations, and even marks of identification on

*This issue features the winners of our eighth annual Writing in the Margins contest. The contest brings to life issues of social and environmental justice through creative non-fiction, photography, and poetry. Contest entries were anonymized and winners were chosen by our judges Alicia Elliott (creative non-fiction), Jalani Morgan (photography), and Gwen Benaway (poetry). Winners are awarded cash prizes of \$500 and their entries are published in print and online. Runners-up are awarded \$150 and their entries will be published online.*

*Read more about Kayla Isomura's photography on page 35. Read the winning poetry entry, "wepâkohiw" by Ashleigh Giffen, on page 40.*

their bodies. I practise saying my ancestors' names aloud, slowly, so I do not forget, but I have never learned to speak Japanese and am self-conscious about my pronunciation. I realize there is a third colour of these cards – white – that I am missing. White was only assigned to those who were born in Canada.

–

Today, I will start building a sculpture out of hundreds of replicated registration cards from the Second World War. The sculpture will represent over 8,000 Japanese-Canadian people,



including my oba-chan and her family, who were taken from their homes in coastal B.C. and detained in the stables and exhibition buildings at Hastings Park in East Vancouver. I grew up eating mini-doughnuts at the PNE Fair in Hastings Park during my childhood summers, but nobody in my family spoke about this history. I don't know if they even knew.

-

I have made copies of the real ones my oba-chan left behind after she died. These registration cards identified her parents, my great-grandparents, who were 49 and 59 years old, respectively, when the war broke out. I found the cards in an old box of her things in a closet at my parents' house: tucked in her fake snakeskin wallet, among my grandpa's funeral papers and an album filled halfway with fading Fujifilm photos from the '80s. Photos taken when my grandparents returned to British Columbia, after they fled Montreal in the '70s. They'd lived in Montreal after the war had ended, when they were not allowed to return to the West Coast.

-

In 1942, my family was given 24 hours' notice to pack suitcases and leave their homes. Perceived as an ethnic threat by the government of Canada, they were displaced from the "security zone," a 100-mile zone along the West Coast, to isolated internment camps or towns such as Tashme, New Denver,

and Greenwood. Tourists now find these remote small towns charming and lovely. *It's just a different pace of life, you know?* I hear the skiing is great in the Kootenays. The snow-capped mountains epitomize Canadian winter. In photos, the fog descends like a veil, nearly masking the violence. It must have been cold to live there in a tarpaper shack.

-

The U.S. government instituted a Muslim registry in September of 2002. Even though it was suspended in 2011, President Trump tweeted about bringing it back. His supporters are keen to use Japanese-American internment camps as a "precedent" for immigrant registry.


-

Canadians talk shit about Americans as if we have no blood on our hands, as if we don't shop on Amazon, as if we didn't massacre Indigenous people, as if we don't have an epidemic of type 2 diabetes, as if we didn't elect Doug Ford, as if we didn't jail over 80,000 migrants (including children) without charge between 2006 and 2014.

-

Did you know that migrants in Canada can be detained without any criminal offence? Each time I visit the public library in downtown Vancouver, I climb the escalator, rising higher and higher beside where migrant holding cells are hidden, in the





adjoining building, shrouded from public awareness. Such secrets are often concealed in plain sight – places where we do not ask questions.

In university, I learn that climate change is increasingly forcing migrants to flee their homelands and cross borders into other countries. In the Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan was one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded. In Bangladesh, rising sea levels are displacing coastal people from their homes. I eventually realize that we won't really talk about this much throughout my social sciences degree. Our professors will acknowledge that, on a global scale, Western countries are disproportionately to blame for climate change, but mostly, we learn about ways to make change as individuals. We try and lead "sustainable" lifestyles. We learn how to meditate. We convince one another to eat less meat. We ride our bikes. We compost. We plant community gardens. We are against climate change. We are united. We turn off the lights, save energy, and do not see race.

I am often only one of two or three people of colour in my environmental studies classes. Sometimes I am the only one.

On the first day of an intensive field course on Indigenous land management practices, a white woman professor leads an "icebreaker" activity. The class follows her instructions as she

asks us to stand in groups representing an ancestry or culture we come from.

Four or five large groups form around the classroom: Dutch, Irish, British, French, Scottish.

I stand alone.

She instructs us to circulate among other groups and convince their members to "join" ours. We would do this by using "fun stereotypes" about our culture as a persuasion tactic. The example she offers us is something like, "come be British with me. We drink lots of beer!" The professor smiles at all of us, her face beaming, as students circulate and begin to break the ice.

I think about stereotypes. I think about the "stinky" lunches I brought from home to school, the ching chong noises, how I was never all that good at math. The stereotypes I have had flung at me are not quite as fun as I imagine it might be if you're white and British and have far less internalized racism. I leave the classroom, my face flushed, cheeks damp, chest tight. A red-headed classmate follows me, knocks on the door of the bathroom stall. She invites me to join her and the others in the Dutch group. I decline. Playing a game of assimilation – even if only for pretend – just doesn't seem all that fun.

My professor later tells me this was not her intention. *This was not her intention at all.* She learned this game from sensitivity training in diversity and inclusion.



I wake up one day to breaking news on the CBC: Hurricane Maria has devastated Puerto Rico. So far at least 15 people are dead. The electricity is out. President Trump is planning a visit.

"I repeat, Hurricane Maria has hit Puerto Rico. The hurricane has made its way to the Caribbean. President Trump still has not made an appearance."

President Trump tweets about how hard hit Puerto Rico is. How much debt they still "owe" the United States of America. He makes no mention of America's occupation and theft of Taíno lands since 1898.

A week after the hurricane, I lie in bed, tossing and turning, sheets cast aside. It's too warm a night for blankets. In my grogginess, my limbs sprawl out, lying in a starfish float position atop the mattress. From the edge of my pillow, I cautiously peer toward A, my partner, who is lightly snoring and fast asleep. We'd basically just u-hauled after a flamingly gay summer romance, and sleeping as bedmates is still a new-ish feeling to which my body is getting accustomed. By the time the clock ticks to 3:30 a.m., I am too tired to fight my eyelids any longer. I finally fall asleep and dream.

I dream A and I are at a body movement workshop. The studio space is in the top corner of the building, in a room with big windows through which we can see out to a lake. It feels familiar somehow. It reminds me of the community arts centre where I attended dance classes as a kid – classes where we spent most of the time running around the room and waving colourful scarves. In my dream, we are sitting on the floor in a circle with the other participants. A brown woman with long dark hair pulled into a ponytail begins talking about climate change and the impacts on Indigenous and people of colour around the world. I begin to cry in the circle. This woman and I make eye contact. She acknowledges me.

I wake up in my bed beside A. I feel safe again. Less anxious than before, somehow.

Nobody talked about our family history while I was growing up, so I've been working toward uncovering it on my own. Sometimes I get so immersed that I forget how heavy-hearted it all is. When I am able to pause and pull away, see it through someone else's eyes, or relate it to the present day, my heart gets whomped.

I wonder, how can I feel such heartache while simultaneously falling in love for the first time?

These days, my other main squeeze is writing. When I first started sharing my work, I submitted a piece to the environmental studies student newspaper at my school. The article explored food deserts and inequities in access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods in the American south, where people are

divided by both race and class.

My article was printed on the last page of the newspaper, beneath two pieces on animal rights. Most of the other articles were about individual change. About how we can lead more sustainable lifestyles. Learn how to meditate. Why we should eat less meat, ride our bikes, compost, or plant more community gardens. Why we need to stand against climate change. Why we need to be united. Why we need to turn off the lights to save power. There was nothing else about race.

I can't recall when I stopped calling myself an environmentalist.

I listen to podcasts now. I listen to people talk about issues that impact their daily lives, straight from the source. One episode I heard recently discussed climate impacts on poor brown migrants in the U.S. The kind of stuff no one seemed to want to talk about in class.

*"...the Angelenos who are disproportionately feeling that intense heat, they live in urban areas with substandard housing, fewer trees. They're surrounded by freeways [...] majority Black and brown. [...] Mother Nature may not discriminate, but people do."*

I listen differently now.

While I construct this sculpture of registration cards to mark the 75th anniversary of Japanese-Canadian internment, it often feels like the world is still asleep. I don't want to think I'm a self-serving, apathetic millennial, but I can't seem to follow the news anymore without crying. Is it terrible to admit I would rather watch Ariana Grande's Instagram stories than the 6 o'clock news? I don't even have cable TV in the first place.

When I wake up, will the climate justice movement finally be led by front-line Indigenous women, peasant farmers, or migrant workers?

On grey days, flowers still bloom.

The news reports the sakura trees in Japan are blooming months early this year. On account of the typhoons and the extreme weather and all that. The cherry blossoms don't know any better.

I think they're just trying to survive. ★



**ERICA HIROKO** is an emerging Japanese/Chinese-Canadian writer and a graduate of the Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University. She dreams about publishing a novel or collection of short stories.



**KAYLA ISOMURA** is a Vancouver-based photographer, currently exploring themes of intergenerational trauma and racialized identity. With a background in journalism, her interest in storytelling through multimedia has been deeply influenced by her roots as a fourth-generation Japanese and Chinese Canadian.



# If only they knew what we know now

Excerpts from *The Suitcase Project*

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY KAYLA ISOMURA  
PHOTOGRAPHY WINNER OF THE WRITING IN THE MARGINS CONTEST



In 1942, my grandparents and great-grandparents were some of the 22,000 Canadians forced to leave their homes along the West Coast because of their Japanese ancestry. I never knew what they chose to take with them, or what they would have lost. Growing up, I never learned of their experiences during the Second World War. They died before I was born and I can't recall my family ever having a fulsome discussion about their lives.

After the Second World War, Japanese-Canadians weren't allowed to return to the West Coast until 1949. As a result, their children grew up dispersed across the country, many of us coming of age without knowledge of our history, culture, language, or even each other. I also believe, despite my grandparents not speaking a word of the past, they still carried the trauma of internment for the rest of their lives. I often wondered how many other young folks of Japanese ancestry had their history torn from them, a pondering that eventually turned into this photography series, *The Suitcase Project*.

In this selection, each subject, identifying as yonsei or gosei (fourth- or fifth-generation) Japanese-Canadian or Japanese-American, was asked what they would pack if forcibly removed from their homes today. Documented in British Columbia and the State of Washington, each individual was given 24 to 48 hours' notice to prepare their belongings based on the same notice and similar timeline Japanese-Canadians and Japanese-Americans were given during the internment and incarceration. This process turned into conversations about the items they chose, the role of this history in their lives, and the relevance of this history today. For many, the idea of packing their life up was daunting and sometimes emotional. As yonsei and gosei, we will never experience the same degree of racism and discrimination our ancestors faced, but others in our lifetime continue to be displaced, divided, and persecuted due to religion, sexuality, and skin. ★



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## QUOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

"The great danger is that, time and time again, the storm of rage that builds up gets defused and coopted into yet another election campaign. [...] Of course, it is important to bounce the old bastards out of office and bounce new ones in, but that can't be the only bucket into which we pour our passion."

—ARUNDHATI ROY

"A friend of mine told me once when I was fussing with the spacing between two characters, she said, 'Amos, put the message in the hands of the people and move on.'"

—AMOS PAUL KENNEDY JR.

"What kind of people are these with such low self-esteem that they need a war to feel better about themselves? [...] May I suggest, instead of a war to feel

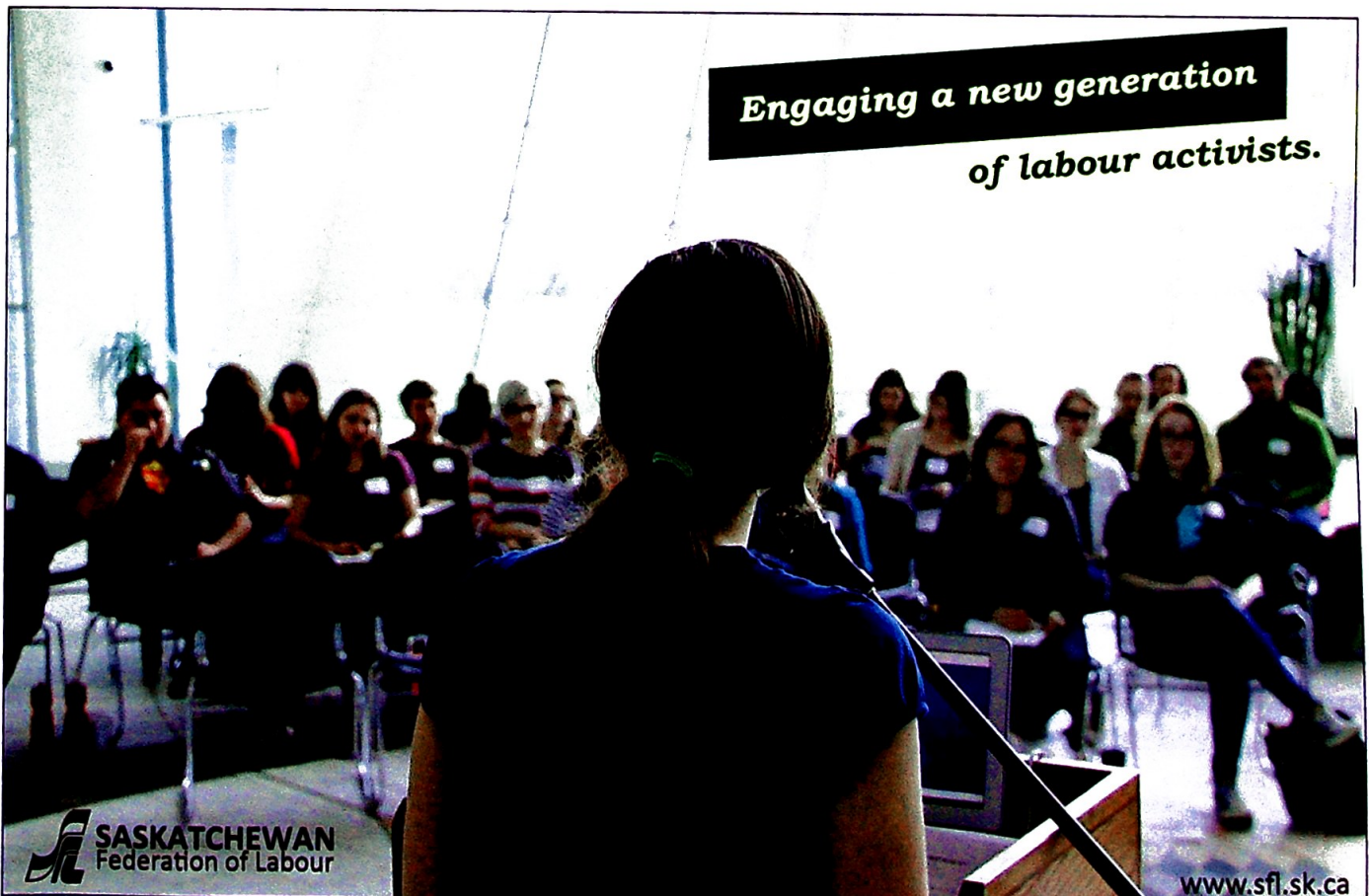
better about yourself, perhaps... sit-ups? Maybe a fruit cup? Eight glasses of water a day?"

—BILL HICKS

"The thing about the cops is, they're all fucking assholes. There is no such thing as the good cop (or the one bad seed, for that matter). They are part of a singular ethos. Cops embody a specific, insidious colonial masculinity. They're the creepy dude you wouldn't go out with so he told everyone you blew him in his car. Of course, they believed him. Why wouldn't they? He was a yt man and you were not. They're every guy who said, 'Come on, baby,' after you said no, and the ones who kept going anyway. Cops are Indian agents. Cops are violent johns. Cops are bullies. Cops are rapists. Cops don't protect us."

—LINDSAY NIXON, NĪTISĀNAK

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# SAVING AKIKODJIWAN

Developers are building condos on top of sacred Algonquin Anishinabeg islands. Why are Indigenous sacred sites not given the same legal protections as settler ones?

BY MATT CICERO  
PHOTO BY EAGLECLAW BUNNIE

On January 8, 2015, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) held a meeting in Ottawa. They invited the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Ottawa police, Gatineau police, representatives from a pulp, paper, and personal care company called Domtar, and a construction company called Windmill Developments.

At the time, Windmill and other developers were planning to build Zibi – “a world-class sustainable waterfront community” of condominiums, stores, and offices – on Akikodjiwan, a sacred Algonquin Anishinabeg site in downtown Ottawa and Gatineau, after demolishing the old Domtar building on the site. Meanwhile, anti-colonial activists were ramping up their opposition to the Zibi development. And – as the meeting

between four police forces and the industry representatives indicates – the cops were also preparing for the resistance.

The sacred site, Akikodjiwan, includes Chaudière Falls and the Chaudière, Albert, Amelia, Victoria, Wright, and Coffin islands. (Coffin Island is now submerged, and Wright Island is considered part of the Gatineau shoreline.) These islands sit in the middle of the Kitchi Zibi (Ottawa River), between the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau.

Dream Unlimited Corporation and Theia Partners (an offshoot of Windmill Developments) – the settler developers – stand to make hundreds of millions by building condominiums on Akikodjiwan. Construction on Albert and Chaudière islands has already begun.

In 2016, the Kitigan Zibi band council filed a land claim that included the Chaudière, Albert, and Victoria islands in the Ottawa River, and there are ongoing discussions about the area between the government and representatives from the Algonquin tribal councils. A group called the Traditional Grandmothers of the Pikwakanagan has also filed a legal case in Ontario's Superior Court of Justice asserting Indigenous title to the islands.

Activists have so far focused on pressuring municipal and federal governments to stop the condominium construction. Despite their efforts, Zibi is still moving forward. There has been talk of blockading or occupying the construction site, but it hasn't happened – yet.

## ANISHINABE-AKI

If you stand on Albert or Chaudière islands, you can see Canada's Parliament squatting on a small hill to the east, overlooking the Kitchi Zibi. From there you can also see the large, ugly brown building that houses Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). The two buildings – one the beating heart of the federal government, the other of the colonial bureaucracy – lie on stolen Anishinabe-aki (Anishinabe land).

Douglas Cardinal, a renowned Indigenous architect, activist, and Elder is at the centre of resistance to the Zibi project. He describes the significance of Akikodjiwan: “These beautiful, sacred waterfalls and islands lie at a symbolic confluence of waters: The rivers flow into the centre from the South, West and North and in turn flow to the East. Similarly, our own ceremonial lodges embrace the four directions and are opened to the East. Furthermore, the Chaudière Falls creates a great kettle; a whirlpool that brings water deep into the earth. With the uprising mist and the surrounding rock forms, the falls appear as a sacred pipe, sculpted by the Creator.”

The Kitchi Zibi watershed sits within Algonquin Anishinabeg territory. The Algonquin Anishinabeg have never ceded or surrendered any part of their lands. King George III issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which recognized Indigenous ownership of large parts of Turtle Island (which settlers refer to as North America), and stated that land could only be acquired by the Crown at public meetings.

According to Algonquin Anishinabekwe author Lynn Gehl, the Royal Proclamation was ratified by the Algonquin Anishinabeg and 23 other Indigenous nations at the 1764 Treaty at Niagara. But beginning in the 1800s, American and British settlers defied the Proclamation and began stealing Algonquin land in the Ottawa Valley by applying for tracts of land through the Crown. As they settled near Akikodjiwan, they set to work damming the Kitchi Zibi and cutting down the old-growth forests for their fledgling lumber industry.

In her book, *The Truth That Wampum Tells*, Gehl details the colonial dispossession of the Algonquin Anishinabeg, as

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The felling of the old-growth forest also hurt the ecological health of the region, greatly reducing the populations of wild animals that the Algonquin hunted. Diseases brought by Europeans, and war with the Haudenosaunee (who were aided by the Dutch and British) decimated the Algonquin Anishinabeg population, and they were pushed to the margins of their territory. Today the Algonquin Anishinabeg land base is 208 square kilometres, a tiny fraction of the 146,300 square kilometres that make up their territory.

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He continues, “Why does Canadian law consider [Qat'muk to be] B.C. Crown land? This is tied up in [a] process that is happening all across Canada, of the Crown assertion of sovereignty undermining Indigenous decision-making about these kinds of places.”

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# SAVING AKIKODJIWAN

Developers are building condos on top of sacred Algonquin Anishinabeg islands. Why are Indigenous sacred sites not given the same legal protections as settler ones?

BY MATT CICERO  
PHOTO BY EAGLECLAW BUNNIE

On January 8, 2015, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) held a meeting in Ottawa. They invited the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Ottawa police, Gatineau police, representatives from a pulp, paper, and personal care company called Domtar, and a construction company called Windmill Developments.

At the time, Windmill and other developers were planning to build Zibi – “a world-class sustainable waterfront community” of condominiums, stores, and offices – on Akikodjiwan, a sacred Algonquin Anishinabeg site in downtown Ottawa and Gatineau, after demolishing the old Domtar building on the site. Meanwhile, anti-colonial activists were ramping up their opposition to the Zibi development. And – as the meeting

between four police forces and the industry representatives indicates – the cops were also preparing for the resistance.

The sacred site, Akikodjiwan, includes Chaudière Falls and the Chaudière, Albert, Amelia, Victoria, Wright, and Coffin islands. (Coffin Island is now submerged, and Wright Island is considered part of the Gatineau shoreline.) These islands sit in the middle of the Kitchi Zibi (Ottawa River), between the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau.

Dream Unlimited Corporation and Theia Partners (an offshoot of Windmill Developments) – the settler developers – stand to make hundreds of millions by building condominiums on Akikodjiwan. Construction on Albert and Chaudière islands has already begun.

In 2016, the Kitigan Zibi band council filed a land claim that included the Chaudière, Albert, and Victoria islands in the Ottawa River, and there are ongoing discussions about the area between the government and representatives from the Algonquin tribal councils. A group called the Traditional Grandmothers of the Pikwakanagan has also filed a legal case in Ontario's Superior Court of Justice asserting Indigenous title to the islands.

Activists have so far focused on pressuring municipal and federal governments to stop the condominium construction. Despite their efforts, Zibi is still moving forward. There has been talk of blockading or occupying the construction site, but it hasn't happened – yet.

## ANISHINABE-AKI

If you stand on Albert or Chaudière islands, you can see Canada's Parliament squatting on a small hill to the east, overlooking the Kitchi Zibi. From there you can also see the large, ugly brown building that houses Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). The two buildings – one the beating heart of the federal government, the other of the colonial bureaucracy – lie on stolen Anishinabe-aki (Anishinabe land).

Douglas Cardinal, a renowned Indigenous architect, activist, and Elder is at the centre of resistance to the Zibi project. He describes the significance of Akikodjiwan: “These beautiful, sacred waterfalls and islands lie at a symbolic confluence of waters: The rivers flow into the centre from the South, West and North and in turn flow to the East. Similarly, our own ceremonial lodges embrace the four directions and are opened to the East. Furthermore, the Chaudière Falls creates a great kettle; a whirlpool that brings water deep into the earth. With the uprising mist and the surrounding rock forms, the falls appear as a sacred pipe, sculpted by the Creator.”

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the government itself. Generally speaking, civil law doesn't apply to those sites. The governance of the site is up to the Church."

"When the government wants to develop a burial site, for example, it usually will get permission from the Church to do so," he concludes.

Canadian law is largely based on English law. But compare the Church of England's control of sacred sites with the decision by the municipality of Oka to construct a golf course on top of a Kanien'keha:ka burial site. When Kanien'keha:ka warriors set up barricades to prevent the construction of the golf course, the Quebec court issued two injunctions ordering the warriors to remove the barricades – leading to the 1990 Kanehsatà:ke Resistance (also known as the Oka Crisis). Christian churches are respected and consulted, while Indigenous spiritualities are disregarded and trampled upon.

Indigenous territory – even lands like those of the Algonquin Anishinabeg that have never been surrendered – are considered to be subject to the authority of the Canadian state through the

**"They're policing a politics that they're not supportive of, that as an organization they actually have a lot of antagonism against. They're really trying to police the success of the movement."**

concept of the "Doctrine of Discovery." In international law, the Doctrine of Discovery holds that exclusive control over a region is assigned to the first European Christian country whose representatives explore that area.

Luk expands on the implications of this practice on the OKT blog: "First, unless an Indigenous community proves to a court's satisfaction that it has exclusive occupation or control of a territory, the default understanding of the Canadian legal system is that that territory is Crown land, even if Crown officials and settlers have never set foot on that land. Second, even if an Indigenous community can prove that they have an Aboriginal right, Aboriginal title, or a Treaty right, that right is always potentially subject to infringement by the Crown."

The assumptions of the Doctrine of Discovery have been referenced in Canadian Supreme Court cases. But the Doctrine also stands in opposition to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which states that Indigenous peoples have a right to their lands, and a right not to have their lands taken from them without their free, prior, and informed consent. Canada has not yet fully ratified UNDRIP, though it's

made moves toward doing so.

Settler sacred sites are usually protected from state or corporate interference because they are private property. But sacred sites of Indigenous nations that are not Crown land are likely to be the private property of settlers, as is the case with Akikodjiwan.

## POLICING LAND THEFT

Based on files provided to *Briarpatch*, obtained through an access-to-information request filed by Paul Sylvestre, a PhD candidate at Queen's University, there were at least five police meetings about the Zibi development in 2015 and 2016.

One of those meetings, on October 27, 2015, was between five police forces – the OPP's Aboriginal Liaison Service, the Sûreté du Québec's intelligence section, the Gatineau police's intelligence section, the Ottawa police's demonstration unit, and the RCMP's National Capital Region General Duty Protection Policing training and demonstration section. They were joined by the National Capital Commission (NCC), a Crown corporation responsible for developing the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau.

Jeff Monaghan is a professor at Carleton University and co-author of *Policing Indigenous Movements*. When I ask him whether he saw similarities between these meetings with developers – like the one on January 8, 2015 – and meetings between pipeline companies and law enforcement, he replies, "The parallel is right there. There seems to be a standard where a seat at the table is given to the private property owners. That's inherently colonial. The only stakeholders that are invited into the policing

meetings are the developers."

Monaghan describes these types of police-industry collaborations as the "new norm."

"The police are hearing about the developer's branding of a land conflict as being about their private property and people disrupting their right to develop property."

In 2017, real estate was the largest driver of Canadian gross domestic product, responsible for over a tenth of Canada's GDP.

A series of OPP reports also record the police force keeping close tabs on protests against Zibi. OPP officers monitored and attended at least four anti-Zibi protests between May 2015 and June 2016.

Ottawa has its own police force that, until 2017, had its own specialized unit for demonstrations because of the high number of protests that happen in the capital city. The involvement of the OPP at protests in Ottawa is not routine.

In an October 2014 email, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) officer Peter McKenna wrote, "Typically we see protests for political awareness purposes in the NCR [National Capital Region] but this has the potential to lead to actual direct action locally



in the form of blockades or similar initiatives if the Aboriginal community became strongly engaged on this issue." The email was sent to Mathieu Brisson, an OPP officer who would later monitor and attend at least four anti-Zibi protests.

"This isn't crime control," says Monaghan. "This is about gathering intelligence about politics. They're policing a politics that they're not supportive of, that as an organization they actually have a lot of antagonism against. They're really trying to police the success of the movement."

Documents received from the OPS also reveal that the police force was gathering intelligence on six local activists opposed to Zibi. Their notes appear to be based on publicly available information – Algonquin Elder Albert Dumont's blog, for example, is mentioned in the OPS' notes.

The heavy scrutiny directed at opposition to Zibi highlights that the OPP and other Canadian police forces perceive Indigenous resistance as a greater threat than many other issues – one that is not contained to a city, but warrants the involvement of provincial police because it challenges the Canadian state. More time, money, and resources are being mobilized by the Canadian state to suppress Indigenous land defence than for other issues not connected to Indigenous resistance.

## DEFENDING THE SACRED

Albert Dumont is from Kitigan Zibi, an Algonquin reserve in Quebec, about two hours north of Ottawa. He's in his 60s, tall, clean-shaven, with short, thinning grey hair. More than 30 years ago Dumont turned to Anishinabe spirituality, and it's been central to his life ever since. Today he's a spiritual adviser, as well as a poet, artist, and activist. He's been at the heart of efforts to protect Akikodjiwan. Along with Algonquin Elder Jane Chartrand, he has organized annual demonstrations calling on the public, and spiritual leaders of all faiths, to protect Akikodjiwan. He's also spoken at demonstrations, on panels, and written several blog posts about Akikodjiwan and Anishinabe spirituality.

I spoke with Dumont about the lack of respect shown to Indigenous spirituality versus settler religions. "It's proof positive that the government of Canada, the province of Ontario, and the municipal government of Ottawa are politicians who have superiority complexes," he says.

"Indigenous spirituality is still something of the devil in their minds, I guess," he continues. "It hurts me spiritually. I feel that I'm [a] second- or third-rate human being because of my spiritual beliefs. A religion could have come here from somewhere else 50 or 75 years ago, and it's protected. They could build their house of worship somewhere and if a developer went there and said, 'We're gonna knock this house of worship down and where it stood we're gonna build a condo,' nobody would tolerate that," he adds.

With construction proceeding on Zibi, things are coming to a head. Foundations are being dug on Albert and Chaudière

islands. There is no certainty about the ultimate outcome of the 2017 land claim and the Grandmothers' legal challenge – and, in any case, it will be years before they are resolved. Apart from taking enormous amounts of time and money, legal cases rely on the courts of the Canadian settler state for justice – courts that still use racist and colonial concepts like the Doctrine of Discovery as precedent.

Federal and municipal politicians are not listening. Ottawa's mayor, Jim Watson, has made it clear that he values economic development, not Indigenous spirituality. When I ask the mayor's office about his support for Zibi, I'm told that, "Economic Development has always been, and will continue to be, a priority for Mayor Watson."

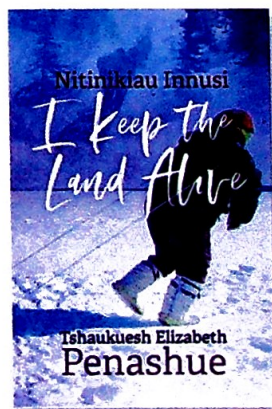
With a federal election approaching, anti-Zibi activists have been planning to make this an election issue for federal members of Parliament. In the absence of other options, blockades and occupations might be the only course of action available to Algonquin Anishinabeg activists and their allies to halt the construction of condominiums on sacred Akikodjiwan. ★



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U O F M P R E S S . C A

# A life on the land



"Here is the diary of a living legend. We can walk now with Tshaukuesh Penashue."

—Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, Innu poet and actress.

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# THE RESURGENCE OF THE JEWISH LEFT IN CANADA

*While antisemitic hate crimes increase in North America, there's been a resurgence of the Jewish left – led by young people, rooted in solidarity with other marginalized communities, focused on ending the Israeli occupation, and held together by new articulations of Jewish community and ritual.*

BY JULIA MÉTRAUX

PHOTOS BY DIANA KURTZER



On October 30, as dusk gathered on the soccer field at Toronto's Dufferin Grove Park, hundreds of Jews and their allies congregated, holding candles and each other's hands. They were mourning the loss of 11 people who were shot to death at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh three days before. The vigil was hosted by the Toronto chapter of IfNotNow (INN), an organization working within North American Jewish communities to end support for Israel's occupation of Palestine.

"For many of us, this moment triggers painful memories of our own experiences with antisemitism and stories passed down from our parents and grandparents," said INN member Vlada Bilyak to the crowd, near the end of the vigil. "Our fear is real. And in these moments, it is easy to let our fear guide our actions. But we must remember that Jews have never been safe in the hands of white supremacy, and that white supremacy seeks to tear us apart."

The Tree of Life synagogue shooting

happened amid a climate of emboldened antisemitism across North America. In 2017 a rash of neo-Nazi posters was plastered across the campus of the University of Victoria, and in 2018 more explicit ones were found in Toronto's St. Clair West neighbourhood. In October, the words "Jews Beware," "Jewish Commies," and several swastikas were found spray-painted on the Winchevsky Centre, a secular Jewish community space in Toronto that houses the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO). And in November, four Jewish teenagers wearing kippahs and black fedoras (hats commonly worn by Orthodox Jewish men) were assaulted in Toronto.

In 2017, reports of antisemitic hate crimes in Canada spiked by 60 per cent from the previous year – part of a swelling wave of hate crimes against Muslims, Black people, Asians, and LGBTQ+ people in the wake of Donald Trump's election.

In a speech following the Pittsburgh shooting, Trump suggested, "If there were an armed guard inside the temple, they

would have been able to stop him [the shooter]." But INN had other ideas.

"We know that safety will not come from more guns and police in our holy spaces," Bilyak said at the vigil. "It will not come from cozying up to power, or building walls around our communities. Our liberation is bound up with the liberation of others, and our safety will come from building real coalitions and relationships of solidarity with Muslim communities, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and so many others targeted by xenophobia and white supremacy."

## THE LANDSCAPE OF THE JEWISH LEFT

"Our liberation is bound up with the liberation of others" has become a rallying cry for young North American Jews who are fighting antisemitism while opposing Israel's occupation of Palestine.

While antisemitic hate crimes increase in North America, there's been a resurgence of the Jewish left – led by young





*Top: Shabir Ally, imam and president of the Islamic Information & Dawah Centre International, speaks at IfNotNow's vigil in Toronto. Bottom: Anton Guz and their grandmother, Iryna Trid, at the vigil.*

people, rooted in solidarity with other marginalized communities, focused on ending the Israeli occupation, and held together by new articulations of Jewish community and ritual.

INN, which started in the U.S. during the 2014 war on Gaza ("Operation

Protective Edge"), established its first Canadian chapter in Toronto in 2017. It added to the landscape of the Jewish anti-occupation movement in Canada, which already included the UJPO, a socialist organization with roots in the Jewish Labour League of the 1920s, and

Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV), which started in 2008 and now has nearly a dozen chapters. Other anti-occupation Jewish groups in Canada include Canadian Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights, the New Israel Fund of Canada, Canadian Friends of Peace Now, and JSpaceCanada.

Each has a different strategy and target audience. Most of these organizations denounce Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, but stop short of opposing Zionism, the larger movement to maintain a Jewish state in the Middle East. Other than INN and IJV, most of these organizations are oriented toward a two-state solution where Israel remains a Jewish state – making them explicitly or implicitly Zionist.

INN, for example, "does not take a position on whether Israel should be a Jewish state, because not all members of IfNotNow agree on an answer to this question," INN member Alex Langer explained in an op-ed in *Haaretz*. What INN *does* affirm is that Israel's brutal military occupation must end, and the group is building a broad-tent movement that tries to change the public's perception of Israel through social media and direct action.

IJV, while not explicitly anti-Zionist, consists mostly of anti-Zionist and non-Zionist members. IJV is active in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement and pushed for a resolution at the 2018 NDP convention to ban products from illegal settlements being sold in Canada. It allies closely with the U.S.-based Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), which recently declared itself anti-Zionist – making it one of the few Jewish organizations to do so. In their announcement JVP explained, "We have come to see that Zionism was a false and failed answer to the desperately real question many of our ancestors faced of how to protect Jewish lives from murderous antisemitism in Europe."

### INVOKING ISRAEL, IGNORING ANTISEMITISM

Most Canadian Jewish institutions are



pro-Israel – channelling money, shoring up Jewish community support, or downplaying the severity of the occupation. But this wasn't always the case. Before the Second World War, the largest movements of North American Jews were non- or anti-Zionist. Major Jewish movements condemned the Zionist vision of a Jewish state in Palestine as religiously inappropriate or an impractical fantasy; others were simply more focused on building Jewish life in the diaspora. For example, the Reform movement of the 1800s – which today remains the largest school of Judaism that synagogues adhere to in the U.S., and the second-largest in Canada – insisted, until the late 1930s, that Jews should remain in diaspora.

In the early 20th century, Zionism was dwarfed by a massive Jewish labour movement that stood at the forefront of socialist struggle in Tsarist Russia and Eastern Europe (the Jewish Labour Bund), and industrial cities across North America. The movement was broadly inclined toward internationalism and ideologically opposed to political Zionism. This history of Jewish socialism and alternatives to Zionism has been all but erased within mainstream Jewish communities.

This was before the turning points of the Holocaust, the genocide which created hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees with few countries that would accept them, and the Nakba in 1948, when over 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes to make way for the nascent Jewish state.

And that Jewish state is propped up by Canadian Jewish institutions. In 2017, IJV filed a complaint against the Jewish National Fund (JNF) of Canada, as part of its #StopJNFCanada campaign to revoke the JNF's charitable status. The JNF had been using donations to fund the Israeli army's infrastructure projects, in contravention of Canadian tax rules. It's since triggered an audit of the JNF by the Canada Revenue Agency. The Toronto-based Beth Oloth Charitable Organization had its charitable status stripped in January for similar reasons.

As Nora Barrows-Friedman explains in the *Electronic Intifada*, "After Israel's establishment in 1948, the JNF took control of most of the land which had been confiscated from Palestinian refugees. In the 1950s, the JNF became a quasi-state organization, with a policy to lease land only to Jews on an openly discriminatory basis." The JNF, best known for planting trees in Israel, also builds parks over the ruins of Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948, and conducts reforestation projects in occupied West Bank territory – ensuring that displaced Palestinians can never

**"We can't sit back and watch as the right exploits that trauma [in order to lead] our community down a path of endless occupation in Israel-Palestine, and fear and isolation across the diaspora."**

return to their former homes.

Today it seems inevitable, in any discussion of antisemitism, that Israel will be invoked. Jonathan Brown Gilbert, who co-founded INN-Toronto, tells me that the Jewish community's support for the occupation is "bound up with a deeply felt sense of isolation and fear."

Attacks against Jews in the diaspora are often used by right-wing Zionists to argue that a strong and militarized Israel is a necessary safe haven in a world that almost always has been, and will continue to be, hostile to Jews. But he adds, "We can't sit back and watch as the right exploits that trauma [in order to lead] our community down a path of endless

occupation in Israel-Palestine, and fear and isolation across the diaspora."

Few non-Jewish leftists understand the depth and persistence of that intergenerational trauma. Nor do they understand that the history of antisemitism doesn't begin and end with the Holocaust – Jews have been subject to regular bouts of displacement, discriminatory laws, forced conversions, synagogue burnings, and pogroms, like clockwork, for thousands of years.

As a result, non-Jewish leftists are notoriously bad at talking about antisemitism. A quick search of *Briarpatch's* online archives will show that, in the last 10 years, this magazine has not published a single article that discusses antisemitism or Jewish life and culture in more than a cursory way.

It's a blind spot that makes for frustrating and painful gaffes. In December, a Pomona College memorial for the victims of the Pittsburgh shooting that read, "Antisemitism Exists. Acknowledge It" was vandalized with graffiti saying, "Palestine exists. Acknowledge it." Implying that all Jews are responsible for the state of Israel's actions is antisemitic. Right-wing Zionists and the Israeli state itself deliberately push the narrative that Israel acts on behalf of all Jews everywhere. We can't allow our allies on the left to parrot the same rhetoric.

More often, however, right-wing Zionists and their allies deliberately equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism, in an attempt to discredit Palestinian activists and their leftist allies. Fighting to distinguish between antisemitism and anti-Zionism comprises an enormous amount of the work that groups like INN and IJV do.

For example, in November, Justin Trudeau offered an official apology for the Canadian government's failure in 1939 to admit a ship carrying 907 German Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. But he made sure to add, "Anti-Semitism is still far too present. [...] Jewish students still feel unwelcomed and uncomfortable on some of our colleges and university campuses because of BDS-related intimidation.



And out of our entire community of nations, it is Israel whose right to exist is most widely – and wrongly – questioned.”

The BDS movement, which grew out of a call from Palestinian civil society in 2005, has borne the brunt of spurious allegations of antisemitism. In response to Trudeau's comments, IJV encouraged its supporters to send letters to Trudeau, telling him that the BDS movement should not be equated with antisemitic hate crimes.

Anti-Zionist and leftist Jews have to fight to be taken seriously in Jewish circles, including on the topic of antisemitism. In 2017, UJPO and IJV were denied spots on the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate's antisemitism committee, which was later disbanded by the Ford government in September 2018. “We feel that our voices, those of leftist Jews, need to be heard,” says Rachel Epstein, UJPO's executive director. “We are no less the victims of antisemitism. We were not offered a place on the committee, which was made up of people from mainstream Jewish organizations.”

## SAFETY IN SOLIDARITY

When Darrah Teitel, a member of IJV, was planning a vigil for the Pittsburgh shooting victims in Ottawa, she made a point of inviting the entire Jewish community – even though IJV rarely collaborates with mainstream Jewish organizations because of their conflicting stances on Israel. The Tree of Life shooting was driven by “white supremacy and racism,” Teitel explains, so she felt it was inappropriate to make vigils about Israel – either to support or criticize it.

“We sent invitations to people in [the Jewish Federation of Ottawa] and all rabbis [from leading congregations in Ottawa],” Teitel says. “The next day we found out that [the Federation] was organizing a vigil at the same exact time.”

Per its website, Jewish Federations of Canada–United Israel Appeal of Canada Inc. is a charity that was founded as a “central body to manage fund transfers to Israel,” and works to connect Canadian Jews to Israel. It's an umbrella

organization that partners with the broader Jewish Federations of North America, which represents 148 Jewish federation chapters. The federations centralize decision-making about the distribution of community resources, and while federation leaders claim to speak on behalf of the entire Jewish community, far too often what they really represent are the political interests of their biggest and most conservative donors.

After the vigils happened, Teitel tells me she was upset to hear that Lisa MacLeod, Ontario's minister responsible for immigration, was invited to speak at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's vigil.

“It's one thing to have someone from Doug Ford's government when they have done nothing but inflame and validate white supremacy,” Teitel says. “It's another thing to have the minister [responsible for] immigration, who has literally been tweeting anti-immigrant rhetoric and has cut almost all of Ontario's settlement money for refugees.”

On the same day as INN's Toronto vigil, the CBC obtained an internal email from the Canada Border Services Agency, which outlined a plan to deport up to 35 per cent more migrants in 2019.

“The person who murdered all of these people at prayer did so because Jews were helping refugees into the States,” Teitel adds. “It's sheer hypocrisy.”

A few hours before the massacre, the shooter at the Tree of Life synagogue had posted online, “HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in.” HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, was founded to help Jews fleeing pogroms in the Russian Empire, and today works on helping displaced people resettle in the U.S. and in refugee camps around the world.

“It's no coincidence that the Pittsburgh attack happened after weeks of Trump and others scapegoating [Jewish Hungarian billionaire] George Soros as the diabolical puppetmaster behind progressive Democrats, behind the Kavanaugh protests, behind the migrant caravan making

its way north from Honduras,” Brown Gilbert notes.

INN's Toronto vigil was endorsed by Jewish and non-Jewish groups alike, including UJPO, IJV, No One Is Illegal – Toronto, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. Brown Gilbert, who helped organize the vigil, explained that the diversity of groups helped send a message to the Jewish community that “other people have our backs.”

“For us, it was critical that we see this moment as a way that we come together,” explains Sterling Stutz, a co-founder of INN-Toronto who also organized the Toronto vigil. “That we're going to respond to this fear and violence by pulling the ties that hold us in this struggle against white supremacy tighter because that's how we're going to be more safe.”

INN's and IJV's commitment to solidarity with communities of colour is influenced by the work of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ), a New York City-based organization that partners with other grassroots groups to build and win campaigns to end racial and economic oppression. JFREJ recently published “Understanding Antisemitism,” a resource for leftists hoping to understand antisemitism within the larger context of racial capitalism and colonialism. It's particularly important to have organizations that connect Jewish safety to that of other communities targeted by white supremacy. Black and brown Jewish people are too often silenced, sidelined, or chased out of the Jewish community by racism from white Ashkenazi Jews, who understand themselves to be the norm of Jewishness.

## “HISTORICALLY, THEOLOGICALLY, MORALLY”

For many young Jews active in leftist movements, their activism is connected to cultural or spiritual practice – building Jewish life and community beyond Zionism, and investing proudly in the history, language, and culture of the Jewish diaspora.



"For me, there is no clear distinction between 'left,' 'Jewish,' and 'organizing,'" Binya Koatz, a Bay Area INN organizer, tells me. "Our job as Jews is to pay back the eternal debt of our divinely secured freedom from slavery in Egypt by making others more free. We were brought out of bondage in order to serve the higher purposes of peace and justice."

"These are not merely theoretical or conceptual turns-of-phrase; these are explicit commandments," Koatz continues. "We aren't commanded just to be peaceful and just, but to 'chase after peace' and 'pursue justice.' So my faith doesn't serve as pretty, rhetorical window-dressing to my politics, but rather is the main thing that holds me accountable – historically, theologically, and morally – to a life of organizing my people, fighting injustice, and redistributing power in this world."

Compared to the U.S., the infrastructure of the Jewish left in Canada is weak, but it's beginning to grow stronger. INN and IJV regularly host inclusive, justice-oriented Shabbat dinners and Jewish holiday celebrations in Toronto and Montreal. IJV hosts a radical Jewish reading group on Saturdays called "Shabook Shalom," where participants discuss texts about Jewish politics and culture, and mark the end of Shabbat with a Havdalah ritual.

And young progressive Jews are increasingly choosing to learn Yiddish. While Modern Hebrew is the language of the state of Israel and is now dominant in Jewish education around the world, leftists are attracted to Yiddish for its diaspora history and the wealth of secular, socialist, and otherwise non-Zionist culture that comes with it.

Plus, in recent years, there's been a wellspring of leftist media by and for young Jews. *Protocols*, a magazine launched in 2018, publishes long-form writing and art with a strong left, queer, and anti-colonial analysis. *Jewish Currents* has recently reinvented itself, transforming from a dusty holdout of the old secular Jewish left to a rapidly growing publication with a young editorial collective. Sam Bick and David Zinman have been running the TREYF

podcast (Treyf means "unkosher" in Yiddish) on the community radio station at McGill University since 2015. With a following that extends south of the border, they interview Jewish and non-Jewish writers and activists from across the left on Palestine, whiteness, and every other topic too taboo for mainstream Jewish media.

All of these efforts – from Pittsburgh vigils that call out white supremacy to queer Shabbat services – are challenging the mainstream idea of what it means to be Jewish. They're attracting young Jews who

which challenge Taglit-Birthright, an organization that gives young Jews a free tour of Israel full of pro-occupation propaganda, reinforcing their supposed "birthright" to occupied Palestinian land.

"Institutions like Birthright exercise a kind of conditional belonging where people on the margins of Jewish communities are told that they *are* Jewish, and that no one will ever question their Jewishness again, as long as they commit to becoming uncritical supporters and defenders of Israel. And further, that that commit-



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## Just a reminder that anti-Occupation Jews and Jews of Color and Sephardim and Mizrahim and Jews with one or no Jewish parents and queer Jews and trans Jews and Jews who didn't grow up in Jewish communities are Jews

#JewishEnough

8:46 AM - 12 Oct 2018

are looking for communities in which they can embrace their Jewish identity without having to stomach unquestioning support for Israel as a litmus test for belonging.

This is the project of INN's #JewishEnough campaign, which explores intersectionality within the Jewish community. Brown Gilbert explains that the campaign "is meant to give voice to the many people within the Jewish community who've experienced the exclusionary [and] border-policing patterns of Jewish institutions. Many of us have been made to feel unwelcome on the basis of 'not being Jewish enough,' or Jewishness being set up in a false tension with things like having a non-Jewish parent or partner, or being queer or Black or brown."

The campaign builds on the rhetoric of JVP's #ReturnTheBirthright campaign and INN's #NotJustAFreeTrip campaign,

ment *is the same thing* as being Jewish and belonging in Jewish community," Brown Gilbert continues. "We're fighting back and showing [...] that there are other ways to be Jewish, that are way better. Most of us grew up with a really limited sense of what was possible, with no idea of the movements that came before us. Now we're rebuilding the infrastructure of the Canadian Jewish left." ★

(Disclosure: Brown Gilbert is the partner of Briarpatch's current editor, Saima Desai.)



**JULIA MÉTRAUX** is a writer and a student at The New School. She is a former member of Independent Jewish Voices. Her work has appeared in the *Tempest*, *Alma*, and *JSource*, among others.



# “AZAADI”

Inside Indian-occupied Kashmir's  
deadliest year in a decade

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY UMER BEIGH





**A** young man in the 20s broke the news to his friends while they were eating in a park in Srinagar. "Burhan is dead," he whispered.

It was July 7, 2016. Over the preceding five years, 22-year-old Burhan Wani had become the face of militant opposition to the Indian occupation of the Himalayan region of Kashmir. Burhan was the commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, a pro-Pakistan Kashmiri separatist organization. He'd left home and taken up arms against Indian rule in 2010, at the age of 15.

"This must be fake news. He's not dead," his friends replied, shocked. But their denial receded quickly. "If Burhan is dead, how many more will be killed?"

In the next six months of protest, their question would be answered: around 100 people would die, and close to 15,000 would be injured.

## THE DEATH OF A MILITANT

Burhan was shot by Indian security forces in the village of Bumdoorra in a counter-insurgency military operation, along with two other militants. His rise to fame marked a new type of militant leader in Kashmir: the social media recruiter. He posted photos of himself surrounded by other militants, clad in camo and toting an assault rifle, his face boldly unmasked. His viral videos called for "freedom from Indian rule," and openly condemned the police brutality and military occupation that mark life in Kashmir, encouraging other young people to take up arms against the Indian occupiers. Like much of the young generation of separatist militants, he came from a well-educated family – his father is a school principal.

Soon after the state police confirmed his death, a picture of his dead body went viral on social media. The streets of Kashmir erupted. Angry demonstrators burned tires and hurled rocks. The air filled with the smoke of thousands of canisters of tear gas and pepper spray. Security forces fired steel pellets, which embedded themselves in the skin and eyes of protesters, partially or fully blinding over 150 people.

Cries for "azaadi" – freedom – rang in the streets. Young men swung on the backs of trucks, shouting anti-India slogans. "Burhan! Tere khoon se ingelaab ayega. Tum kitnay Burhan maro gai ghar-ghar se Burhan niklay gaa! [Burhan! Your blood will bring revolution. The more Burhans you kill the more will rise from every single household!]"

Many of them began hurling stones at the nearby military bunkers that have mushroomed across the southern part of Kashmir. An estimated 700,000 soldiers, paramilitary, and police are stationed in the conflict-ridden state, making the area the most densely militarized place in the entire world.

Often it takes a single incident in Kashmir – the killing of a civilian by a paramilitary trooper, or a social issue like frequent power cuts, lack of drinking water, or crumbling roads – to spark months of protest and, in turn, violent repression.

However, in the summer of 2016, with the killing of Burhan, the state plunged further into crisis. What followed was six months of unrest – mass mourning and wailing, day and night demonstrations, and massive clashes between protesters and government forces. Authorities imposed 53 consecutive days of curfews. Schools were closed for months, and public transit halted. Hartals (strikes) continued for several months. The Srinagar-based newspaper *Rising Kashmir* compared it to the six-month general strike in Palestine against the British colonial government in 1936.

## THE POLITICS OF KASHMIR

Since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, Kashmir has been claimed in its entirety by both countries. India administers around 45 per cent of the region, which contains 70 per cent of its population, and makes up the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The region has seen three decades of armed insurgency, with militants seeking to separate from India or merge with Pakistan. Today, there are a few hundred militants

reportedly operating in the Indian-administered Kashmir Valley – though there were thousands during the height of the movement in the 1990s.

In the late 1980s, a series of rigged and fraudulent elections saw Kashmiri youth losing faith in the legitimacy of Kashmiri politicians. The two major political parties in Kashmir – the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) – are both pro-India and have, again and again, formed coalitions with India's ruling parties.

In 1989, Kashmiris began to revolt against a visibly corrupt political system that continued to offer them a series of politicians sympathetic to their Indian occupiers. It was the start of a long and violent period of political unrest and militancy, which continued through the '90s. The Valley flooded with Indian military and paramilitary forces, which remain to this day. There were no general elections held in Kashmir for seven years, between 1989 and 1996.

As of 2017, there have been at least 2,000 unmarked mass graves discovered in border areas of Kashmir, and human rights groups have accused government forces of staging gun battles to hide mass killings and "disappearances." Women who are believed to be militant sympathizers are subject to sexual violence – like when Indian soldiers allegedly raped more than 30 women in the Kashmiri villages of Kunan and Poshpora in 1991. Militants, too, have been accused of kidnappings, sexual violence, and killing civilians.

Since the 1978 Public Safety Act, Indian security forces have enjoyed near-total impunity. The act allows government forces to "preventatively" detain people – including minors – who pose a threat to the state's security. It's often used to detain people who have not committed any criminal offence, and to delay the release of a person acquitted by a court.

Since 2015, J&K has been ruled by a coalition of the PDP and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India's ruling right-wing Hindu-nationalist party led by

*Left: Mourners hold aloft the dead body of 19-year-old Adil Farooq Magray. In June 2017, security forces opened fire on protesters who were trying to disrupt an anti-militant operation in the village of Ganowpora, and Magray was shot in the chest.*



**"I have died every day, every moment, waiting in anticipation ever since he took up [a] gun, until his dead body was finally brought home wrapped in a shroud."**

Narendra Modi. The PDP and BJP's relationship was always tense, worsened by differences in handling the renewed insurgency ignited by Burhan's death. The BJP cracked down on separatists, while the PDP ordered the release of separatist leaders and granted amnesty to first-time stone-throwers. Then, in February 2018, BJP ministers publicly supported the alleged Hindu rapists of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in Jammu region, and the PDP's leader, Mehbooba Mufti, forced the BJP to fire two of its ministers. The rift was out in the daylight. In June 2018, the BJP withdrew its support for the PDP, and Mufti resigned in protest. Her resignation led to governor's rule being imposed, meaning that the BJP's representative has since directly ruled the state.

Then, in November, Mufti announced that she had the support of the JKNC and India's National Congress party, which would allow the three parties to create a "grand alliance" and form government. Days later, J&K's governor, Satya Pal Malik, dissolved the legislative assembly, which means a fresh round of elections are likely within the next six months.

As India's general elections loom in April–May, the BJP has seen its public support dwindle. Many Kashmiris believe that the government has increased Indian military operations in order to escalate tensions in the Valley, with the aim of whipping up Hindu-nationalist fervour. Over 500 people were killed in 2018, the bloodiest year in Kashmir in

a decade. Half of those were separatist fighters. "The body bags of Kashmiris sell in Indian elections, unfortunately," Khurram Parvez, a human rights activist, explained to *Al Jazeera*.

### THE MISSING PLEBISCITE

This year marks 71 years since the UN adopted Security Council Resolution 47. Recognizing India and Pakistan's competing claims for Kashmir, the resolution recommended that India facilitate a plebiscite that would allow the people of J&K to decide whether the region would join India or Pakistan. And although India initially agreed to the plebiscite, it has since refused to hold the referendum.

Today, Kashmir is a patchwork of different regions with diverse populations: it's assumed that the mostly Buddhist region of Ladakh in the east and the majority-Hindu population of Jammu in the southwest would vote to join India, while the majority-Muslim population of the Kashmir Valley in the south and of Pakistan-administered Azad Kashmir in the north would support allegiance to Pakistan.

But the proposed referendum never allowed for a third option, beyond joining India or Pakistan: an independent country.

Although Kashmir is a well-worn topic of jingoism in Indian media – so much so that most Indians and Pakistanis alike have lost interest in the occupation – Western media coverage of the occupation has been





sparse. It's largely because India's reputation as a rising economic superpower, a liberal democracy, and a strong ally of the U.S. endears it to Western media. The Kashmiri people's aspiration for freedom and self-determination has not sparked the kind of international attention or solidarity that, for example, Palestinian liberation struggles have received – despite the obvious parallels between the occupations.

Under Modi and Benjamin Netanyahu, India and Israel share a cozy relationship. In 2017, India – the world's largest

importer of arms – confirmed a deal to buy over \$1.6 billion in missiles from Israel, making it one of Israel's largest clients. Hundreds of Indian military and police forces have also been trained in Israel for counter-insurgency and "antiterror" operations, and Israeli-made drones are used in Kashmir to surveil mass protests and pinpoint the locations of militants.

In 2015, the BJP announced plans to resettle tens of thousands of Kashmiri Pandits – Hindus who fled during the insurgency of the '90s – in new townships in Kashmir. The BJP is borrowing from

Israel's tactic of creating self-contained, heavily guarded settlements in occupied territory. Many Kashmiri Pandits opposed the government's plan, worried they would become targets in Kashmir.

And there are similarities between the religious nationalisms of Hindutva and Zionism – both endear themselves to the West by posturing as neutral states fending off hostile Muslim neighbours. J&K is the only Indian state with a majority-Muslim population, similar to Palestine. The shared spectre of "Islamist terrorism" allows India and Israel to sanitize their



Despite curfew-like restrictions, thousands gather at the funeral of militant Irfan Ahmad Durrani, who was killed in a brief firefight in central Kashmir's Budgam district on September 28, 2017.





Left: Protesters shout anti-India and pro-freedom slogans during a funeral in the village of Ganowpora. Right: Members of the Indian Central Reserve Police Force patrol the deserted streets outside the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar in September 2018.

brutal occupations.

Even when the occupation of Kashmir is discussed in Western media, it's typically framed as a bilateral territorial conflict between India and Pakistan. And when time fighting breaks out in the Valley, the sponse from the two states is the India blames Pakistan for inciting conflict, and Pakistan denies the allegation, saying that India instigated the fact that Pakistan has previously used arms, stationed proxies in the region, and recruited Kashmiri civilians. The pro-Pakistan militias makes it easy for India to dismiss the azaadi movement as a foreign-funded agitation rather than a genuine struggle for freedom.

The reality on the ground is that the people who are fighting the hardest against Indian occupation aren't necessarily fighting to join Pakistan. Though most of the largest militant groups are pro-Pakistan, there is a section of the younger generation who claim that Pakistan's involvement in the conflict is informed by little more than self-interest. Fundamentally – as in Palestine – Kashmiris are fighting for an end to the violent occupation under which they live.

### "A SYMBOLIC REFERENDUM"

When Burhan's body reached his hometown of Dadasara in southern Kashmir

on the morning of July 8, a sea of people turned out to attend his funeral. Defying a curfew, the gathering was estimated at 200,000 people. Teenagers perched on tree branches, and young men sat on tin roofs of houses to get a glimpse of the historic moment.

"The crowd of mourners was so dense and so immense that it took me an hour to walk a few kilometres," says Shams Irfan, a journalist with *Kashmir Life*. According to Irfan, around 50,000 people packed inside Eidgah, an open-air prayer hall where Burhan's funeral was held. After each round of funeral prayers, new mourners would fill the same ground again. They continued to gather for nearly a week.

"The funeral was a symbolic referendum in favor of [the] larger struggle for self-determination," explained Zubair Ahmad, a scholar from Islamabad, who attended the funeral. "Referendum, otherwise, is a larger, informed democratic exercise – and this funeral was the best symbolic representation of what could happen if a referendum in Kashmir [took] place."

The trend of funerals as political referendums in Kashmir dates back to at least October 2015, when the funeral of Abu Qasim, chief of the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba who was killed in a gunfight with police, saw a

turnout of thousands of people.

"When my son left the family in 2010, I never expected that he [would] be able to garner such huge support," 62-year-old Muzaffar Wani, Burhan's father, told *Briarpatch*. "Hundreds of thousands showed up for his funeral, showing their support. My only concern, then, was [that] people should not get indulged in stone-throwing to nearby army barricades, as it would have inflicted more casualties and bloodshed."

In its first report on human rights abuses in Kashmir, released last year, the UN concluded that Indian security forces had used "excessive force," resulting in unlawful killings during crackdowns on protests in the summer of 2016, and called for an investigation.

"Recently, on his second death anniversary, many [asked] me how I feel," says Muzaffar. "I told them that I have died every day, every moment, waiting in anticipation ever since he took up [a] gun, until his dead body was finally brought home wrapped in a shroud. For me, for my family, every day is an anniversary."

### OF GUNS AND PENS

In both life and death, Burhan sparked a resurgence in militancy in Kashmiri youth. Since his death, around 300 youth have joined militant groups. Police



sources confirm that most of them have since been killed in different counter-insurgency operations.

"Militant killings anywhere trigger emotions across the Valley but in most cases, there is a strong correlation between the area of recruitment and number of militants killed from that area," a 2018 report by police forces in J&K concluded. The report found that nearly half of all new recruits into militant ranks come from within 10 kilometres of the homes of slain militants.

One new militant was 26-year-old Mannan Wani, who was pursuing his PhD at Aligarh Muslim University, and joined Hizbul Mujahideen in 2018. Months after taking up arms, he penned two open letters in which he explains why he decided to join the militancy.

"Resistance is resistance; it can neither be peaceful nor violent. In fact, [the] violence is not that we have picked up gun[s] to fight occupation but violence is the presence of more than 12 lakh [1.2 million] Indian armed men in Kashmir, violence is the presence of fortified army garrisons, bunkers and pickets, and occupation in itself is [the] biggest violence," he writes.

On October 11, 2018, during a gun battle that took place in Kupwara in northern Kashmir, Mannan was shot dead by security forces. But this time, when news of his death was announced, Indian authorities were already prepared to clamp down to prevent mass gatherings. The Internet was suspended in parts of north Kashmir, blocking the spread of information about Mannan's death. Rumours circulated that other militants had been killed or had surrendered.

Police refused to confirm the news of Mannan's death to reporters for hours. Journalists were barred from entering the village leading to his hometown of Takipora, which is heavily surrounded by military cantonments. Most of the reporters were asked to wait for hours, and hardly any photojournalists were allowed to cover the scene of the funeral prayers.

But despite the clampdowns, almost

50,000 people managed to attend his funeral. Mourners walked barefoot for dozens of kilometres from the neighbouring village of Palhalan to bid a final farewell to their hero.

"Mannan's funeral could have been another symbolic referendum, given his popularity across the social classes, had the Indian state not done the kind of preventive management that it did," says Latief, a law graduate from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, who requested that only her last name be used.

Amid a year of escalating political tensions, the Kashmiri diaspora living in Canada organized a silent protest in Toronto in August. The protesters carried placards with messages like "India, stop killing Kashmiris," and "Justice not bullets."

"The aim of [the] protest was to create awareness and remind [the] Indian state that they have promised [the] world community that they will conduct a plebiscite in Kashmir, which is yet to be held," Womic Baba, who took part in the protest, tells *Briarpatch*.

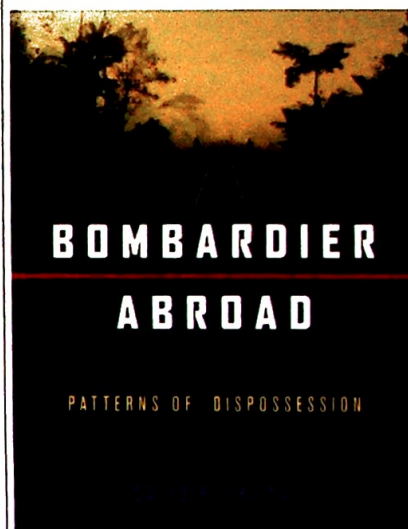
Muzaffar Wani stresses, "Had killing been the solution, Kashmir should have been resolved by now. What will [the] state of India achieve [by] killing so many people here? Does their religion allow them [to] kill young men who are only seeking their dispute should be resolved?"

Without the promised referendum, street protests and mass funerals are one of the few remaining ways for the Kashmiri people to voice their desire for freedom. But as India's general election looms, Indian forces will likely become more repressive toward public displays of resistance. Without uproar and condemnation from the international community, the Kashmiri people's cries for azaadi will remain unheeded. ★



**UMER BEIGH** is a journalist from Indian-administered Kashmir. He is a graduate of the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi.

## NOW AVAILABLE



### Bombardier Abroad Patterns of Dispossession

By David P. Thomas

By participating in international infrastructure projects, Thomas argues that Bombardier is both inserting itself into highly contested social and political climates and profiting from actions that further exacerbate existing conditions of dispossession and inequality. *Bombardier Abroad* is a critical look at the problematic practices of a Canadian corporation and the ways in which the Canadian state is culpable.



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# BODIES ON THE LINE

Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline replacement slices through the southern half of Saskatchewan, but there's little Indigenous opposition in the province. To mount our own fight, we'll have to learn from other Indigenous resistance efforts along the pipeline's route.

BY BRANDY-LEE MAXIE  
PHOTOS BY JAIDA GREY EAGLE

**O**n the road leading to a field dotted with tipis at Standing Rock, hundreds of flags from different nations whipped in the wind.

Each flag that flew on "flag road," including the Treaty 4 flag, has a history of resistance and a modern-day battle with genocide and colonialism behind it. Each flag represented treaties that have been broken over and over again, nations defending

their unceded land from settler governments, and Indigenous communities fighting to stop companies from poisoning land and water.

At its peak, Standing Rock had about 20,000 people gathered in the Great Sioux Nation territory, better known as Oceti Sakowin (or the Seven Council Fires). These are homelands that Saskatchewan's Nakota Assiniboiné people shared for



thousands of years, before a border split us into Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

Many who gathered in North Dakota returned to their home territories to take a stand against industry in their own backyards. Now, on both sides of that border, Indigenous peoples are fighting again – to stop the expansion of Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline, which would ship over 700,000 barrels of crude oil each day from Alberta's tarsands to the Husky oil refinery in Wisconsin.

This article began as an investigation into the Indigenous opposition to Line 3 in Saskatchewan. After all, the pipeline cuts clear across the entire width of this province. But the loudest Indigenous voice in Saskatchewan in opposition to Line 3 has, for a long time, been me, and I already know the landscape. While there is scattered grassroots resistance to the pipeline, there are not many elected Indigenous leaders opposing the project in Saskatchewan.

But thinking about Indigenous pipeline resistance as a set of distinct fights contained within provinces or countries isn't helpful. The pipeline snakes across borders because of the collusion of settler politicians and settler capital. If we're going to stop it from expanding, Indigenous resistance must also flow across colonial borders. And despite a lack of visible opposition from Indigenous leaders in Saskatchewan, there are lots of Indigenous people on both sides of that border already fighting to stop Line 3. I hope that this article will provide the strategy, inspiration, and momentum for Indigenous activists in Saskatchewan to escalate their own fight.

## KILL THE BLACK SNAKE

Line 3 begins in the Canadian tarsands in Alberta, slices a diagonal line across southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and extends down through Minnesota into Wisconsin.

Originally built in 1960, it currently carries around 380,000 barrels of crude oil per day from Edmonton, Alberta, to the Husky oil refinery in Superior, Wisconsin. It's operated by Calgary-based Enbridge, Canada's largest natural gas distribution company, which also has oil pipelines that criss-cross Canada and the U.S.

Enbridge says the pipeline is corroding – it's only able to transport half of its original capacity and is at risk of leaking. Line 3 has already ruptured three times – east of Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1999; near Hardisty, Alberta, in 2001; and downstream of Glenavon, Saskatchewan, in 2007 – spilling a total of nearly 50,000 barrels of oil

onto farmland and wetland. The last rupture, in 2007, was due to corrosion.

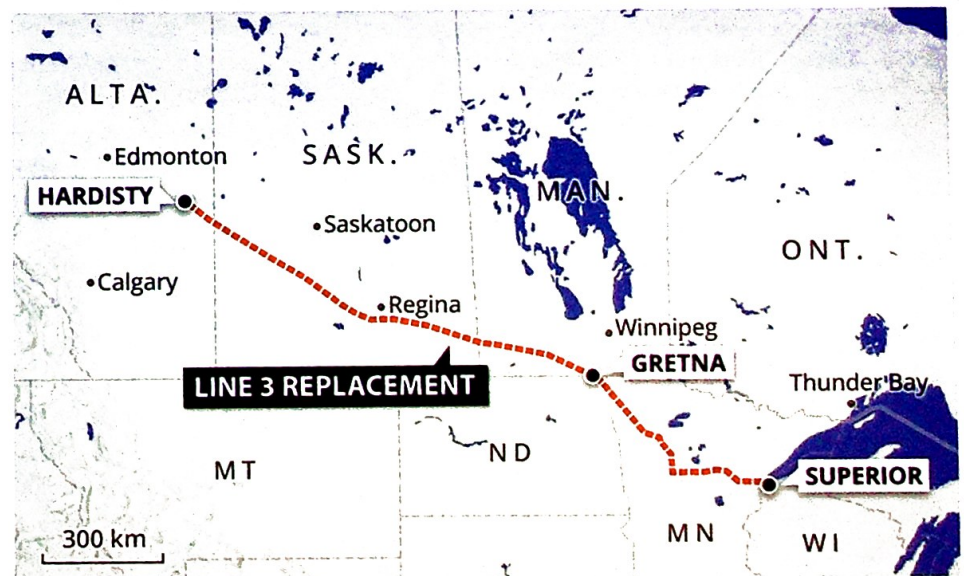
The existing Line 3 pipeline is being decommissioned, leaving the old pipeline to rot underground. It risks leaching the oil and chemicals it contains into the groundwater and soil. Water can also enter the corroded underground pipeline, leading to the unnatural draining of wetlands. Activists are saying this sets an alarming precedent of pipeline abandonment.

Now, Enbridge is building a new line – the Line 3 replacement – that mostly follows the existing path of the original Line 3 pipeline, except for some route changes in Minnesota. At over \$7 billion, the Line 3 replacement would be the most expensive and biggest infrastructure project in Enbridge's history, and would carry over 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

Since the summer of 2017, parts of the pipeline replacement have been built in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and the section that runs through Wisconsin has been completed. But before the pipeline becomes operational, it needs to be built in Minnesota, and Enbridge is stuck waiting for approval there. Enbridge wanted to begin construction in Minnesota in early 2019, after the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission granted a certificate of need and approved the pipeline's route in 2018 – but Indigenous and environmental groups have been appealing the approval, hoping to kill the pipeline altogether by halting construction of the crucial section.

## “TO THE DEPTH OF A PLOW”

In Minnesota, the proposed route of the pipeline replacement, and the abandonment of the existing pipeline, crosses land covered by treaties between the U.S. government and the Anishinaabe people (also known as Ojibwe and Chippewa). The 1837 treaty, in which the Anishinaabe ceded land in what is now Minnesota to the U.S. government, promised that “[t]he



Map: Enbridge.com





*Top: Rose Whipple gives testimony at the State of Minnesota's Draft Environmental Impact Statement public meeting in Saint Paul in June 2017. Bottom: Youth leaders of Paddle to Protect pose during a break from paddling in northern Minnesota. Next page: Atquetzali Quiroz dances at the Dance for Water rally against Line 3 in Saint Paul in June 2017.*

privilege of hunting, fishing, and gathering the wild rice, upon the lands, the rivers and the lakes included in the territory ceded, is guaranteed [sic] to the Indians." The 1855 treaty between these same two groups, which ceded more land in northern Minnesota to the U.S. government, was signed with the assumption that the 1837 guarantee also applied.

If Line 3 destroys lands and waters, thereby preventing fishing or hunting, or if it destroys the wild rice beds, it's in violation of these treaties.

In Canada, the pipeline crosses lands governed by Treaties 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7, and the territory of many nations that never signed treaties. When these treaties were signed, Indigenous

leaders understood – and told settlers – that they were agreeing to share their land only "to the depth of a plow," to enable the white settlers to farm. Tarsands extraction and laying pipelines underground unequivocally violate the spirit of these treaties. The Canadian government, however, insists that Indigenous nations "surrendered" our rights to the land and its resources through treaties.

In July 2010, an Enbridge pipeline spilled nearly four million litres of heavy crude oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. It became the largest inland oil spill in American history. In 2017 there was an oil spill on the Ocean Man First Nation in southeast Saskatchewan. That pipeline, operated by Enbridge Income Fund Holdings Inc. until it was sold to Tundra Energy Marketing Inc. in 2016, leaked about 200,000 litres of crude oil.

The oil that spills from Enbridge pipelines also cannot be contained by borders.

Enbridge currently has 58 agreements regarding Line 3 in place with 95 Indigenous communities and groups, many of whom are along the route of the pipeline. Chief Evan Taypotat of Kahkewistahaw First Nation and Chief Todd Peigan of the Pasqua First Nation, both in Saskatchewan, have professed support for the pipeline, citing the employment opportunities that the pipeline would provide.

The pipeline runs under the Qu'Appelle River in Saskatchewan, but Peigan says that Enbridge's activity near the river will be monitored by the First Nation. Enbridge estimates the pipeline will create about 9,175 direct, indirect, and induced jobs in Saskatchewan. But oil companies are notorious for exaggerating the number of jobs they predict their projects will create, and it's likely that the vast majority of jobs will be temporary. For example, in 2013 Kinder Morgan told the National Energy Board that constructing their Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline would require an average of 2,500 workers per year for two years, with 90 permanent jobs – but Kinder Morgan's website now pegs the number at 800,000 "direct, indirect and induced person-years of employment."

But for some Indigenous communities, which have been systematically impoverished by settler governments for years, the prospect of new employment and skills training – however temporary – is seductive enough to ally with an oil company.

## PADDLE TO PROTECT

In August 2017, I was arrested during a protest on the Minnesota and Wisconsin border. Our protest halted work on the construction of Line 3 – I stood at the side of the road, holding a sign that read "LOVE WATER NOT OIL." To date, I am still the only "Canadian" who has been charged with "disorderly conduct and resisting arrest" in the Line 3 protests. Being torn away from my daughter and thrown into a jail cell was a traumatic moment for both of us. I had flashbacks to the clouds of tear gas and rubber bullets at Standing Rock. It was my first arrest and my first set of charges, and I was reminded that settler states will wield the law



to shut down any threats to big oil companies.

Between August 12 and September 2, 2017, youth from Saskatchewan and Minnesota joined the Paddle to Protect journey, a 400-kilometre canoe trip down the Mississippi river in northern Minnesota that kicked off the protests against Line 3. A group of young warriors came together from the Lakota, Nakota, Anishinaabeg, Aztec, and Cherokee nations, among others, to protect the water, the wild rice beds, the medicines, and their futures. They lived along the river for weeks, setting up camp every night and dining on wild rice and fish harvested from that same river.

Shanaya Buffalo, a 15-year-old Anishinaabekwe from Regina, reminisced about her summer in Minnesota. "Protecting something so sacred and pure is the greatest thing you can do," she tells me. "Fighting for something so dear in everyone's heart is beautiful yet sad, because there is only so much we can do."

My daughter, Valyncia Sparvier, is a 15-year-old Nakota/Anishinaabekwe from White Bear First Nation in Saskatchewan. She was raised fishing, swimming, and living on a lake near Sakimay First Nation. Sparvier also visited Standing Rock on the weekends during the Dakota Access Pipeline fight, but she's been a water protector her whole life.

"Being able to drink clean water is a necessity that everyone needs, but most Indigenous communities struggle to have a drop of clean water," she says with a trace of heartbreak. "I

strongly believe that you should fight for what you love, and without water we won't be alive. So when I found out about the Paddle to Protect, I just loved the idea of being near water, while raising awareness [about the Line 3 fight]."

### "A SPIRITUAL WAR"

As Line 3 construction began, it was met with Indigenous resistance camps along its route, determined to protect the wild rice beds, the great lakes, and traditional lifeways. In Minnesota there's Camp Makwa, Camp Turtle Island, and Ma'iingan Prayer and Cultural Camp – plus other camps that I won't name or share the location of. Because of the history and ongoing threat of infiltration/surveillance, some camps are open only to trusted warriors.

In Minnesota, this is not their first Enbridge pipeline fight. From 2013 to 2016, Winona LaDuke, along with many other Minnesotans, opposed Enbridge's Sandpiper pipeline. They successfully saw Enbridge cancel their proposal before a pipe could be laid. However, the Line 3 replacement project is hot on its heels. LaDuke is the executive director of Honor the Earth, an organization that does education, coordinates actions, and fundraises for grassroots Indigenous environmental groups.

On July 11, 2018, the Spirit of the Buffalo Camp was erected on traditional Dakota land in Treaty 1 territory. The camp is right on the U.S.–Canada divide near Gretna, Manitoba, where Line





3 crosses the border more easily than many Dakota people can. A sacred fire has burned there ever since.

The Spirit of the Buffalo Camp, with the support of the Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition (MEJC), works to educate the surrounding settler communities on issues that exist with pipelines and their construction, like the climate impact of burning fossil fuels, and missing, murdered, and exploited Indigenous women and girls.

This camp became home to Geraldine McManus, a Dakota mother who is no stranger to pipeline fights. She also stood with Standing Rock two years ago. Despite the racism and intimidation she's faced over the months, McManus has no plans to retreat any time soon. She tells me about a visit from an armed man in a truck with Alberta plates who yelled threats at campers. These incidents further confirm the dangers that Indigenous women face for simply existing and peacefully protesting on their traditional homelands.

"It hurt my spirit to be subjected to so much hate," McManus tells me. "This is a spiritual war, and I'm in prayer here a lot. I can't even begin to explain what I'm doing when people say I'm not doing anything."

Most days McManus sits not far from the new Enbridge pumping station. She's able to watch the pipeline activity on the American side of the border. At one point she was questioned by border security from Canada and the U.S. But mostly she ventures into local towns such as Gretna to engage with the community, so they are aware of why she is out there, hunkered down for the winter, living in a waganagon (a traditional Indigenous home that predates Canada).

This education means making clear the relationship between pipelines, environmental destruction, and the negative impacts to communities. Pipeline construction projects are often accompanied by higher rates of human trafficking, drug trafficking, violent assault, and sexual assault, and especially impact people in nearby First Nations. Areas that host the "man camps" of transient, mostly male pipeline workers have seen numbers of reported domestic violence incidents and sexual assaults double or triple.

## THE ART OF ACTIVISM

In December I attended a fundraiser in Minneapolis called WATER, a collaboration of art and music to support the movement against Line 3. The night saw performances by New York underground hip-hop legend Immortal Technique, and Indigenous hip-hop artists like Nataanii Means and Tufawon (Rafael Gonzalez).

Both Means and Gonzalez have been actively opposing Line 3 in Minnesota. They are a part of a group called the Ginew Collective, which has been camped for many months through the permit process in Minnesota, where Enbridge was granted a certificate of need to run through the state last summer.

On December 21 – the same day as WATER – it was announced that the state of Minnesota is suing itself over its

decision to grant a certificate of need for Line 3.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce appealed the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's decision, with outgoing governor Mark Dayton explaining that Enbridge "failed to demonstrate that Minnesota needs this pipeline to meet our future oil demand." It's the seventh active Line 3 lawsuit against the state of Minnesota – most of the suits have been filed by Indigenous tribal governments and organizations like Honor the Earth, Youth Climate Intervenor, and Friends of the Headwaters.

Means began his set by acknowledging the traditional Dakota territories we were on. He was also in Standing Rock for many months, enduring the violent military siege and bitter cold of the Prairie winter.

"We live with our trauma," he emphasized. "Every day we have to pass something that reminds us that we were imprisoned in our own lands." He spoke of the status cards we carry that determine how Indigenous we are, attaching our names to numbers.

Nataanii Means is the son of American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Russell Means, who was seminal in the occupation of sites such as Wounded Knee, the Black Hills, and Alcatraz. "I came from a family of resistance, from warriors," he continued. "People that fought against the government."

WATER reminded me that art has always connected Indigenous activists on a global level – from prophecies and protest banners to resistance music and spoken word poetry. So while there isn't anyone locking down to pipelines in Saskatchewan, there is definitely someone locking down somewhere for Saskatchewan.

Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island didn't see borders when they coexisted in harmony with the ecosystem for thousands of years. When we limit our thinking to the confines of colonial borders, we fail to be good neighbours. When we prioritize economic prosperity without thinking of ecological impacts, we fail to be good ancestors.

Maria Isa, a Puerto Rican singer who performed at WATER, explained how she came to stand in solidarity with the Line 3 resistance. "My tribe in Boricua, it didn't have water for a long time and it still doesn't have a lot of clean water right now," she explained. "The Dakota, the Anishinaabe brothers and sisters, they came to Puerto Rico with me and made sure the water we were drinking down there was clean."

"I may be Boricua and he may be Mexican, but we don't have borders. And when we come here, in the land of the Indigenous people here, we fight for all of our movements. Because the water is what puts us together." ★



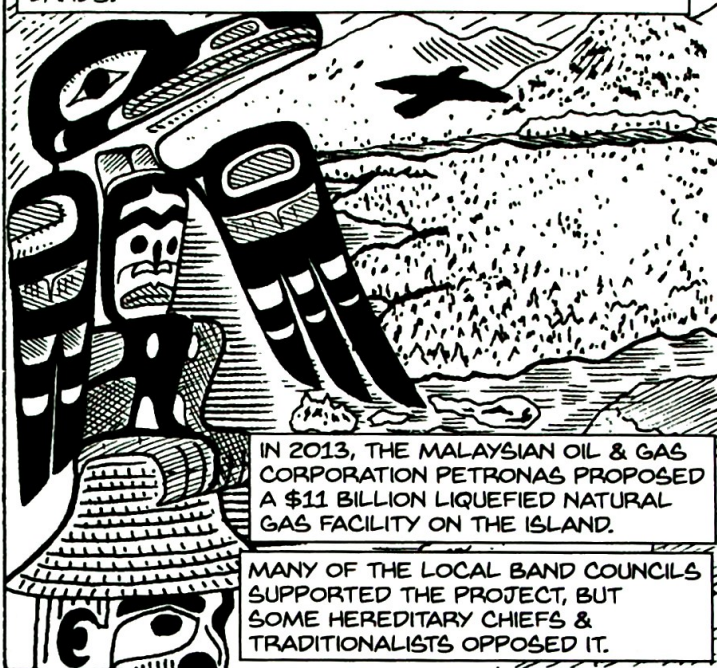
**BRANDY-LEE MAXIE** is a Nakota Assiniboine mother of three from the White Bear First Nations. She is an entrepreneur, an artist, and a journalist/storyteller, but will also put her life on hold to live in a resistance camp from time to time.



# Protecting Lelu Island

BY  
GORD  
HILL

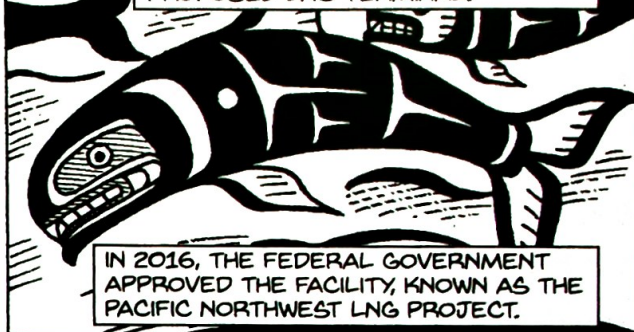
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MANY OF THE LOCAL BAND COUNCILS SUPPORTED THE PROJECT, BUT SOME HEREDITARY CHIEFS & TRADITIONALISTS OPPOSED IT.

IN 2015, MEMBERS OF THE NEARBY VILLAGE OF LAX KWALAAMS SET UP A PERMANENT CAMP ON LELU ISLAND IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED LNG TERMINAL.



IN 2016, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT APPROVED THE FACILITY, KNOWN AS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST LNG PROJECT.

IN JULY 2017, PETRONAS ABANDONED THE PROJECT DUE TO MARKET CONDITIONS & POLITICAL OPPOSITION.



IN JANUARY 2019, THE PRINCE RUPERT PORT AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED A MORATORIUM ON ANY DEVELOPMENT AROUND LELU ISLAND.

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# How can farmers fight back against the new NAFTA?

*NAFTA 2.0 is chipping away at policies that guard Canadian farmers from price volatility and ensure high labour and environmental standards. The National Farmers Union says the fight has to combine grassroots and policy advocacy.*

BY ERIN INNES

ILLUSTRATION BY ANNETTE NEDILENKA

In the 1960s and '70s, Canadian farmers were in crisis. Farmers producing perishable products like dairy and eggs were trapped in a boom-or-bust cycle by powerful processors and distributors, who would wait until large quantities of perishables came on the market and then pit farmers against one another in bidding wars to force prices down. Farmers were forced to sell their products for less than they cost to produce, because distributors could simply refuse to buy them. The result was shortages of perishables for consumers, as well as a disastrous loss of income for farmers.

This crisis was met by a nearly 20-year-long countrywide campaign of protests, letter-writing, educating consumers, lobbying, and farmer solidarity. Out of it was born Canada's supply management system, which maintains a consistent supply of goods for public consumption and ensures that farmers receive a price for their products that has a realistic relationship to the cost of production. Supply management has become the envy of other countries, like the U.S., in which price volatility and inconsistent supply impact both farmers and consumers.

Since the early 1990s, neoliberal free-trade agreements have been relentlessly chipping away at supply management and other agricultural policies, like quality control for grain exports, which are crucial to maintaining incomes for family farmers in Canada. Since Trudeau, Trump, and Peña Nieto shook hands over the new NAFTA agreement, those chips have gotten bigger. Dairy farmers are hit particularly hard in the new agreement, with U.S. farmers gaining access to an extra 3.9 per cent of Canada's dairy market.

It brings the total of imported dairy on supermarket shelves in Canada up to almost 20 per cent of the national supply, says the advocacy group Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Worryingly, much of this U.S.-produced dairy will be from cows that have been injected with Bayer's (formerly Monsanto's) genetically engineered bovine growth hormone, rBGH. rBGH is illegal in Canada but used widely in the U.S. dairy industry, which also receives grain and other subsidies that Canadian farmers don't enjoy, and makes U.S.-produced dairy products artificially cheap compared to Canadian products. In Canada,

it's the supply management system that allows Canadian farmers to get sustainable incomes for their products without needing to rely on government subsidies in the first place.

It took a social movement to create supply management 47 years ago. Today, it seems unlikely that anything short of that level of solidarity and tenacity will succeed in defending it.

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## THE NFU LEADS THE FIGHT

The new NAFTA agreement is officially called USMCA (U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement) or CUSMA (Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement), depending which side of the international pissing match you're on. But it has raised howls of protest from family farm organizations in all three countries. Canadian farmers face attacks on policies that have long protected the Canadian agricultural sector from the price volatility that is so common in the U.S. and Mexico, and which provides for higher labour and environmental standards on Canadian farms than in the other two countries. Many of those policies, including supply





management and import/export controls, were adopted as a result of decades of organizing on the part of farmers themselves. One of the staunchest pillars of that organizing for the last 50 years has been the National Farmers Union (NFU).

Formed in 1969 when provincial farmer organizations banded together to strengthen their position in relation to policy-makers in Ottawa, the NFU is the only direct-membership voluntary organization of family farmers in the country. They take no sponsorships or funding from either government or industry, and their policies and programs come from their membership of family farmers across the country. That independence and grounding in farmers' real lives and struggles is the source of their power and, with NAFTA 2.0, that power is needed more than ever.

Civil society groups like the Council of Canadians have lauded the removal of Chapter 11, the portion of the old NAFTA agreement that allowed corporations to sue governments if regulations negatively impacted their expected profits. But it's not all good news – the new agreement establishes a Committee on Competitiveness and a Committee on Good Regulatory Practices, made up of government appointees from all three countries, which will look for ways to harmonize regulations across the three countries. They must have a process for any "interested persons" to approach them with an application to change existing policies or prevent new policies from being adopted. The agreement defines a "person" as "either a natural person or an enterprise" – meaning that corporations are being given a permanent seat at the

regulatory tables of all three countries.

This regulatory harmonization, alongside the parts of the new agreement targeting the Canadian dairy and grain export sectors, represents a serious corporate power grab in Canada's agriculture sector.

To the NFU's director of research and policy, Cathy Holtslander, the new NAFTA is really just more of the same. "We have a fundamental disagreement with trade agreements that put control over what we need for life in the hands of corporations," she tells me. One of the central frameworks that guides the NFU's work is food sovereignty: building food and agriculture systems whose goal is to produce healthy and culturally appropriate food for people through ecologically sound and sustainable methods in which farmers and eaters hold the decision-making power.

"When we look at these trade agreements through the lens of food sovereignty," says Holtslander, "we find that they're not compatible." This incompatibility exists at the heart of NAFTA 2.0 – food and agriculture can't be treated like other commodities because they're vital to life. But it also extends to specific policies within the agreement, like the erosion of supply management.

"We see supply management as an institution of food sovereignty for Canadians," says Holtslander. "So when you look at what's in this latest deal and you see that Canada has let the U.S. have a say over our dairy policy, that's a pretty blatant loss of democratic control and national sovereignty," she explains.



To counter policies like the new NAFTA, the NFU has put the knowledge and experience of family farmers at the centre of food and agriculture policy. "All of our policy positions have come from our grassroots members, based in their experience, the problems they're having, and the things they're doing that are good models for how we want things to be done," says Holtslander. "They represent the collected wisdom of our membership over many years."

The union is organized into seven regions, each of which brings the concerns and best practices directly from their members to the regional conferences, where that collected wisdom is formalized into policies. Those policies and practices then go to the national conference, held each November, where members from across the country come together to discuss, debate, and agree on shared concerns, best practices to promote, and policies for which they want to lobby.

Julie Enman is a board member in NFU Region 8, British Columbia and the Yukon. She sees the collective power that farmers have through the NFU as critical. "One of the reasons farmers are so often shortchanged is that outside of a farmers' market, we are not visible in urban spaces," she says. "People often forget about the valuable and needed services we provide."

Enman says that the NFU provides a unified voice that backs up grassroots work with lobbying power. "Farm issues vary so much regionally," says Enman, "but share some common themes. It's important to make those connections, and voice them across the spectrum of this humongous empty country that we live in."

## FROM THE GRASSROOTS

"Because food issues are farm issues and farm issues are food issues, farmers and non-farmers have many goals in common," says Dianne Dowling, of the Kingston, Ontario, local of the NFU. Translating opposition to corporate control of the food system at the national level into action at the grassroots level is a long-term process of making community connections. "In the early 2000s, in an effort to be proactive in helping farm families improve their net incomes, our local began to focus on projects that could build the local farm and food economy," says Dowling.

That work brought farmers and eaters together in ways as diverse as local food feasts, producing a local food directory to help the public know where and how to get local food, many public meetings, and a Local Food Summit to educate the public about food and farming issues. It led to the creation of a Local Food Declaration that forms the basis for the area's food policy, as well as an organization, Loving Spoonful, that works to increase access to healthy food in the area. The cumulative

effect of these kinds of actions, taken over time, creates a more solid farm economy, which helps farmers be less beholden to corporate-controlled economics.

"In our local," says Dowling, "members support each other by sharing equipment, helping with work, and socializing together, and we have a very supportive community of non-farmers who buy our products and get involved in food and farm concerns." That stability allows farmers to resist being pushed around by distributors, processors, and other capitalist entities that would otherwise have a stranglehold on farmers' livelihoods.

This kind of grassroots work fits into the larger framework of food sovereignty and agroecology that guides the NFU's policies nationally. Combatting the corporatization of the food system often looks like promoting alternatives that prioritize ecologically produced food for consumption by local communities. The NFU sees agroecology as a political framework. Within it, the farm-as-factory model – which puts more power in the hands of corporations and leads to fewer, larger farms – is replaced by a farm-as-ecosystem model that puts power back in the hands of farmers and the communities they serve.

*"Load up the cows and other critters and take them for a city stroll," says Enman. "Act like it's a petting zoo and talk to people. Let the cows mow the legislature lawn!"*

## SCALING UP

At first glance, it might seem like the NFU's two tactics are in opposition. On one hand, they support small-scale farming at the grassroots level. On the other hand, they advocate for policies like supply management and export/import controls that support much larger farms, which, while still run by families and not corporations, are producing for distribution in the supermarket or the export market.

"I don't think there's as much tension as it might appear at the surface," Holtslander muses. "Agroecology doesn't have to be really small scale. You can still have an agroecological approach to, say, grain farming. If we talk about agroecology as working with nature, and keeping our production based more on loops than on extraction, it's absolutely possible to do larger scale farming that way."

Enman agrees. "I think a lot more has to be done around sustainability and production practices, regardless of scale," she says. "For example, much of B.C. has suffered from drought and forest fires, without doubt connected to climate change. Farmers, particularly cattle farmers, are often painted as the top emitters of greenhouse gases, but folks using holistic and agroecology practices often aren't producing such high emissions."

She says she sees greater unification between farmers across the country on issues like water consumption and tackling climate change as important parts of the vision moving forward for the NFU. She hopes that both farmers and consumers will realize that practices that meet these ecological goals are also an important



part of pushing back against trade deals like the new NAFTA. "Whether people realize it or not, these issues are connected."

Dowling sees the federal government's focus on corporatizing agriculture for competitiveness in the export market as one of the key issues that the NFU is fighting. "I am very disappointed in the federal government's preoccupation with exporting Canadian products, including agricultural products. About one in eight Canadians are food insecure – we should be focusing on getting our food products to Canadians, not pursuing the race-to-the-bottom world of international trade."

Holtzlander agrees, and sees the NFU's ability to act collectively to influence policy as crucial to shifting the balance of power in that economic system back into the hands of farmers. "We do have export agriculture in Canada and it covers a large land base," explains Holtzlander. "It's important not to abandon these large tracts of arable land to corporate industrial agriculture. We need to fight for that land base to be under the control of human beings rather than corporations. To do that, we need to maintain institutions that give farmers a say." In day-to-day terms, that means working in local communities to connect farmers to the eaters who rely on their products, while also lobbying at the policy level to restrain the corporate influences that make maintaining those direct connections so much harder.

Ultimately, the work of combatting the corporate attack on family farms lies where it always has, in the hands of farmers and the communities that support them. Enman says that now is the

time for farmers to make themselves visible in urban spaces – like the tractor-led protest against the new NAFTA, organized by Quebec's farmers' union in Montreal in November, that included thousands of urban dwellers brandishing kitchen utensils and pushing shopping carts. "Load up the cows and other critters and take them for a city stroll," says Enman. "Act like it's a petting zoo and talk to people. Let the cows mow the legislature lawn!"

Organizations like the NFU can provide the larger framework of policy and solidarity, and can pressure state agencies with the power of their many voices. But ultimately it's up to all of us to connect with and support the farmers that feed us if we believe in the vision of food sovereignty for our communities. Farming is a slow and steady way of living, and the fight to protect a sustainable farming sector will always be similarly incremental and specific to each place and time. Organizations like the NFU, with a national reach and the capacity to work at the policy level, can amplify the voices of farmers and community members, helping us to fight the battles that are too big for us to take on alone. "Our basis is solidarity," says Holtzlander. "It's amazing the strength and confidence that it gives people, because they know they're part of something bigger." ★



ERIN INNES is a writer, activist, and organic farmer, and a former member of the National Farmers Union. She lives in a small rural community on the Pacific coast.

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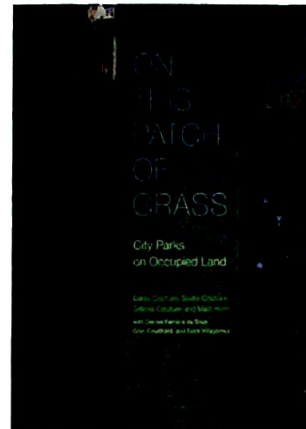


## On This Patch of Grass: City Parks on Occupied Land

By Matt Hern, Selena Couture, Daisy  
Couture, and Sadie Couture

Fernwood Press, November 2018

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REVIEWED BY JESSICA DEWITT



In June 2018, six people at the Justice For Our Stolen Children Camp were arrested by Regina police. Videos showed police officers physically carrying non-violent protesters by their arms and legs out of the tipis that had been set up in Wascana Centre. The camp was established by Indigenous protesters demanding justice for the deaths of Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine, as well as shedding light on systemic racism in the child welfare and criminal justice systems.

At the camp's height, 15 tipis stared defiantly up at the Saskatchewan legislature. The camp hosted powwows, feasts, soccer games, book launches, and vigils. And while the camp lay on Treaty 4 territory – the homeland of the Métis Nation and the original lands of the Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota – it also sat on Wascana Centre, an urban park operated by the Saskatchewan provincial government in conjunction with the City of Regina and the University of Regina. The Provincial Capital

Commission and Regina police said they were concerned about park visitor safety, and that the camp violated park bylaws that banned overnight encampment, fires, and unofficial signage. In July, radio talk show host John Gormley called the protest an excuse for “free camping” – an accusation that played to racist stereotypes of freeloading Indigenous people.

These colonial tools of control – both official laws and social norms that prioritize white uses of park space – were used to expel Indigenous peoples from a public area that lies in their traditional homeland. This episode in Regina forced settlers to think about which rules we enforce and which rules we let slide in parks. Who is expected to follow the rules and who is not? Who is unquestionably welcome in these so-called public spaces and who is not? These are also some of the questions that the book *On this Patch of Grass: City Parks on Occupied Land* asks.

*On This Patch of Grass* examines the colonial aspects of Vancouver's Victoria

Park – colloquially known as “Bocce Ball Park” – which is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. This volume is both a personal and an academic text: the four authors – parents Matt Hern and Selena Couture and their children, Sadie and Daisy Couture – have lived beside Bocce Ball Park since 1991. Hern, in his long vocation as a community organizer and scholar, has written a dozen books that make leftist interventions into the institutions of ordinary life – forcing readers to rethink schools, team sports, safety, cities. This newest book is in the same vein – it takes a seemingly benign bit of urban space and lays bare its contradictions.

The book is separated into four main parts. Through Sadie's use of oral history interviews and Daisy's photo essay, readers explore the ways that different visitors experience and use the park. Selena uses place and street names around Victoria Park as a springboard to examine the



*These colonial tools of control – both official laws and social norms that prioritize white uses of the park space – were used to expel Indigenous peoples from a public space that lies in their traditional homeland.*

colonial history of the park and the land on which it sits. Hern looks at urban park history in order to demonstrate that urban parks generally have “an abiding interest in the assertion of order, pacifying the unruly city, instrumentally deploying the natural world for political ends and managing carefully structured renditions of what constitutes appropriate human behaviour.”

Hern’s analysis resonates with Joe Hermer’s arguments in *Regulating Eden: The Nature of Order in North American Parks* (University of Toronto Press, 2002). Hermer argues that governments use parks to satisfy the public by producing a seemingly authentic wilderness experience that is still heavily regulated and subject to social norms. Among park scholars, the lens of Indigenous sovereignty and colonialism is more readily applied to national parks; this volume expands this park literature by applying these discussions to urban space.

Sadie explains that in urban parks,

plants, animals, and humans are policed and expected to adhere to both official and unofficial social laws. Drinking is one of the most obvious examples of regulated social protocol that is policed unevenly across social groups in Victoria Park. Middle-class white park visitors who drink recreationally in the park are deemed acceptable, but Black and brown folks as well as homeless people who drink in the park are considered unruly and irresponsible. Although the same law applies to both groups of drinkers, it is almost exclusively the behaviour of marginalized people that is policed.

The authors say that “parks as they are currently constituted are always colonial enterprises” and spaces upon which the performances of whiteness take place. But parks are also spaces that give us “clues as to how we can share land in a decolonial sense.” The authors do not lay out a clear set of steps for how this decolonization should take place – but in a book authored by four white settlers, this feels, to me,

like an appropriate move rather than a shortfall of the volume. However, the argument might be stronger if it included more Indigenous voices weighing in on how to make this claim a reality.

The Justice For Our Stolen Children Camp regularly posted a wish list on its Facebook page. This wish list usually included supplies like firewood, Dr Pepper, and bug spray. But one day their wish list simply stated: “calm allies who are able to engage with visitors.” The major strength of this short book is to invite people who do not regularly think critically about parks to start doing so – and to engage their peers in this conversation. It provides a base of knowledge on which white settlers can build in order to act as better accomplices in the process of decolonization. ★



JESSICA DEWITT is a historian of Canadian and American environmental history. She specializes in park history.



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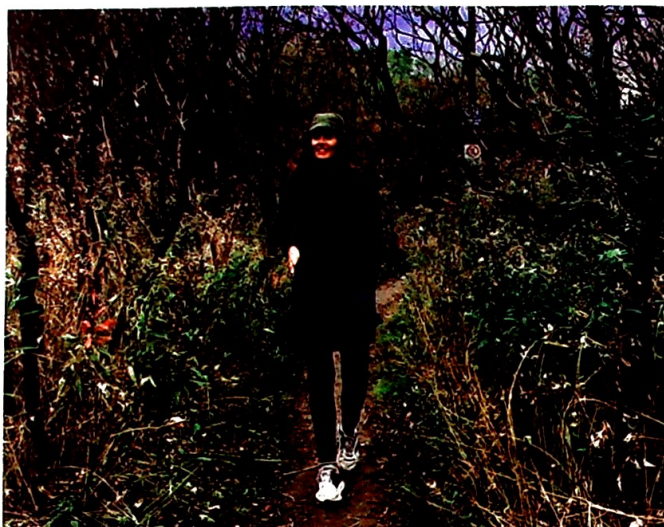
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## SUSTAINER PROFILE #55

### HAYLEY LAPALME



Hayley Lapalme is a Franco-Ontarian settler living in Treaty 13 territory (Toronto). She is an avid cyclist and canoeist. For the last few years she's led a national community of practice called Nourish, which engages health care decision-makers in anchor institution thinking: hospitals building health and wealth in their communities through the food they source and serve.

#### How did you get involved in food systems work?

I started at a small NGO researching food procurement patterns in public institutions. The interest evolved and I started to work directly to engage public institutions in considering their role in a transition to more just, inclusive food systems. Along the way I realized that these are conversations that have often excluded marginalized voices. It became especially apparent that Indigenous peoples were missing from so many of the conversations I was invited to or convened. When my colleagues and I set out to design the Nourish fellowship program, that's where we started: with a commitment to meaningfully build relationships with Indigenous partners.

#### What do you get from reading *Briarpatch*?

I see *Briarpatch* as a continuation of my education. It helps me recognize opportunities to share my power, to build coalitions, and to align my work with existing movements. Living in downtown Toronto and having gone to McGill and the University of Toronto, it can feel like I'm living in a bubble. *Briarpatch* helps me to break out of that bubble.

#### Why are you a Sustainer?

I really believe in the need for independent journalism that gets beyond neoliberal narratives. I grew up in a home that subscribed to the *Globe & Mail*. Now I look for more critical perspectives that challenge power and that centre voices from the margins – *Briarpatch* does that.



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# wepâhokiw

she is swept away by the current  
WRITING IN THE MARGINS POETRY WINNER

the fundraiser for water protectors  
movie night with  
dairy free pizza cause all natives are lactose intolerant  
but ignore it anyways

i walk back to the bus stop with stacks  
even when i give the girls who came pieces for every day of the week

and the moon  
the moon just a night into fading from fullness  
laughs at me for wanting to cry

how did i not expect only two people to show up  
one

of them

white and sorry

there is a scene in smoke signals where the sad native boy cries as he pours his father over bridge into  
roaring angry always been there river  
and i could not help but picture myself entangling in the meander

maybe land is where my sacrifice has been born and is  
growing

waiting for me to give up and jump into current but

the current comes with steel  
it comes with missing mothers who just left their husbands for the final time  
walking down highway to get flour canned corn dreaming of recipes shoestring wrapped braids

the current comes with men who didn't mean to be away that long cause going back means to call  
something broken

going back means empty

space that was never empty  
something always wasn't there

so i am something not full like that moon who laughs at me  
wishing i could be forgiven ash in river  
mourning and grief drawing the curtain

obsessed with brown confused  
not wanting to say goodbye to Indians you just met cause  
their mouths were huge and hopeful

★

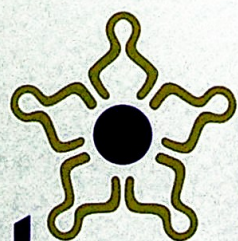


ASHLEIGH GIFFEN is an Anishinaabe/Pueblo/Icelandic creator. She studies Indigenous studies and creative writing at UBC Okanagan, on Syilx territories. She is a multidisciplinary artist and hopes to ignite readers through lenses of Indigeneity and dreamstate.



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